# THE EVANGELISM FOR TO-DAY

ROBERT FERGUSON

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S. Hatcher

WITHDRAWN

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# THE EVANGELISM FOR TO-DAY:

## OUR NEW APPROACH TO THE OLD TASK.

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*THE THIRTIETH HARTLEY LECTURE:*

WITHDRAWN

# THE EVANGELISM FOR TO-DAY:

## Our New Approach to the Old Task.

BY
ROBERT FERGUSON.

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To

THOSE CHOICE SOULS

—preserved in the Shrine of the Heart—

who, in my life and ministry,

have shown to me

"THE KINDNESS OF GOD"

I

DEDICATE THIS BOOK,

Borrowing, if I may, the lines of another

to express the offering I make them.

"If the rose in meek duty
May dedicate humbly
To her growers the beauty
Wherewith she is dowered—
To you, O Dear Givers,
I give you your giving."

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# PREFACE.

THIS lecture has been written with the general reader and my fellow preachers in view. Possibly at times I have forgotten the general reader in thinking of the preacher and just as often forgotten the preacher in thinking of the general reader. I trust, however, that the title of the book will not have aroused expectations I have been unable to fulfil. Not infrequently the subject has extended itself too widely before my view, so that all that could be done—in the words of Bacon—has been "to tinkle a bell."

I am deeply conscious of my indebtedness to many writers both of the older and newer schools. I, myself, under deep obligation to these, desire to make my contribution serve in a mediatory capacity.

I have concluded the writing of the book feeling that I would have liked to say much more on various topics relevant to this study. For example, I have been able to touch scarcely at all upon methods of Evangelism, Personal Evangelism, Pastoral Evangelism, or Group Evangelism.

I am specially conscious of debt to my friends, the Rev. Frank Holmes and the Rev. H. G. Meecham, M.A., Ph.D., who have been good enough to give me their kindly assistance by reading the manuscript and offering valuable suggestions. Of course I alone must accept responsibility for the statements made and the treatment given.

I want to take the opportunity, too, of saying how impossible the whole of my labour upon the lecture would have been had not my wife relieved me in so large a measure of the strain which inevitably falls upon a Minister in the active work.

R. F.

Fairfield,
Manchester.
*14th April*, 1930.

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*We are getting beyond the stage of blaming each other, and in our several ways we are asking what can be done. We believe that Christ has something to say to England, and that He would say it through the Churches.*

WHAT IS IT?

HOW SHALL IT BE SAID?

CAN WE SAY IT TOGETHER?

*Under the Moderatorship of Principal Garvie the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches is conferring with the object of some joint or simultaneous attack on this problem of Evangelizing the Homeland, which daily becomes more urgent.*—
M. E. AUBREY, M.A.

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*Methodist Union will, almost certainly, be here soon. A great evangelical attack on the nation is the only thing which can secure its certain success. But that attack ought not to be undertaken merely for the sake of union, and cannot be undertaken unless men are moved by the truth of their message.*—
J. E. RATTENBURY, D.D. *Methodism and the Modern World.*

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*The Best of all is, God is with us.*—
JOHN WESLEY'S dying words.

# THE
# EVANGELISM FOR TO-DAY:
## Our New Approach to the Old Task.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

#### 1. *What we are facing to-day.*

I want first of all to present a few preliminary considerations, which appear to be necessary if the way is to be prepared for the more systematic study of our topic. And, I am going to take the freedom of putting in the curves before coming to the straight lines, to develop the theme visually in its early stages, so making a graduated approach to the main subject matter. It is surely better to "sight" your landscape well before you survey it. It is better to get the lie of the land and its colour before marking out with greater

care its contours. What we shall need, of course, prior to anything else is the right spirit of approach, so that we shall not only look at the situation, but see it as it really is, and see it with a tender eye; see it not as merely making observations about it but so that it will objectify itself upon our soul and conscience, and "stab our spirit broad awake."

What we shall need to get fully focused in our vision is that an unprecedented onslaught is being made upon our whole spiritual conception of life. A great wave of secularization is breaking, with what seems to be an increasing force all over the world. It threatens to overwhelm us, working wreckage on our most precious things, making flotsam and jetsam of our cherished inheritance and spending its force most destructively and devastatingly upon "the generation of our children."

The only check we can conceive as being at all likely to stay the ravages of the flood, is to engage ourselves in close formation and in new alignment in the might of a new creative experience of Grace and by the methods of an open-eyed and open-hearted Evangelism, to turn back precipitately the tide, setting its flow in the opposite direction.

We need to see that it is a real and not an imaginary peril that we envisage; that, indeed, the alternative is desperately sharp and that, unless we overthrow secularization, it will overwhelm us. Only a Church resting back upon a vital experience of God, and throwing itself forward in the might of a great passion will ever be able to press back the force of so menacing a tide-wave.

In face of this challenge by the sheer pressure of events, we are compelled to become a search party into our own resources. As the inevitable sequence of facing a threatening peril, the question arises: How shall we meet it? What hast thou in thine hand? We believe that Christ has something to say to us in the homeland, and that He wants to say it through the Churches. What is it? *What is our Gospel?* Have we the wonder-working rod? or can our opponents do the same with their enchantments? It is part of the complexity of the situation that the same increase of knowledge and control of Nature's powers which have been perverted to the fostering of the secularistic temper of mind, have also been influences insinuating themselves into our own outlook and thought, leaving not a few less sure about their own Gospel. The situation is putting our Gospel to the proof. What cannot prove itself a "power" under the threatenings of such a crisis as this, must suffer discredit and be discarded. "A thing is what it does," is the principle we ought to apply and we ought to see more clearly whether what we have in our hand is "the authentic rod" or "just some piece of dead wood."

We shall then see that the situation respecting the Gospel is "all of a piece" with the situation as it relates to the Church. The question, "What is in thine hand?" rests back on the question, "What hast thou in the house?" For the Church is a Gospel Community. It lives by the Gospel and for the Gospel. The structure bespeaks the

function as surely as the function determines the form. It is in the fellowship life of the Church that the creative experience is begotten, and the expression of that life in Evangelism sustains its ardour and finds its "urge" only as it rests and gets its "backing" from the base.

And the Church represents always the crux of the Gospel's strength or weakness. Given a vital Christian fellowship behind it, the Gospel speeds its way like an arrow to its mark. But let the Church's life be languorous and inert, the shaft falls lamely and aimlessly as from a loosely strung bow. Hugh Latimer has a memorable passage in which he tells how his yeoman father taught him not to merely shoot an arrow with the force of his arms but "to throw his body into the bow." Only as a living Church bends its whole strength and throws its whole weight into the bow will the shaft of the Gospel win its needed directness and force.

Our discussions will lead on naturally from a statement of principle to a question of fact. If by an inevitable necessity "Judgment must begin at the House of God," what is our attitude and temper in relation to the Evangelism which is our primal task. In other words—to snatch at the piercing question addressed long ago by Isaiah to King Hezekiah in respect of the disclosures he had made to certain men of Babylon who had come to him—"What have they seen in thine house?"

Our answer, even as Hezekiah's, will not be found satisfactory to prophetic souls. We have

been strangely blind to the realities of the situation, missing out the vital consideration, loosening ourselves where we ought to have been vigilant and strict, seeing only to-day and the day after, rather than "the future's broadening way," and so we have left ourselves open to the aggressions of an unrelenting foe.

And in particular we have suffered an arrest of evangelism. The great creative "urge" in the Church's soul has failed to find fulfilment in its appointed task; and as is the case with all thwarted life impulses, there has grown up what might be called, using the analogy of psychology—a neurosis in the Church's soul which has also developed in us all manner of "substitutions" which have tended gravely to our hurt.

We shall first seek to indicate and illustrate certain principles the application of which will best overthrow the menace without and break up the complex within. Perhaps at this stage it may be forgiven me if the preacher's gown is more in evidence than the student's cap. I will try to wear the student's cap later, hoping it may fit. Meanwhile I feel happier in the preacher's garb.

## 2. *The Spirit of our Approach.*

It is only as we feel the need of the world "staring us out of all countenance" that we can bring the atmosphere of reality into the consideration of our

theme. The speculative "air," appropriate as it is in certain studies, is entirely out of keeping here. Its movements are upon another plane and the two spheres hardly touch each other. Nor does speculation possess the scales by which to register any really grave issue, whilst in that airy realm vital urgency has no sides into which to press its spur.

A story about Prof. Alfred Marshall has etched itself very deeply in one's memory in regard to the disability suffered by abstract thought. He seems to have feared lest he lose amid his research work the saving sense of reality and the warm human touch. Seeing one day in a second-hand shop a small oil painting of the pathetic face of a "down and out," he bought it, setting it over the chimney-piece before him in his study. And all the time he plunged into his study of the Problem of Poverty those wistful eyes "kept watch above his own." A glance at his "Patron Saint" as he called him pulled him back to the level where he felt the spur and poignancy of the real human situation, so making the agony of lives shadowed with sorrow and shamed with want clear a thoroughfare through his heart. "Great thoughts come from the heart," though, as Lord Morley said, "They are better if they go round by the head." *A great need exists for priestly souls to "take the situation not only on their hands but on their hearts;"* to feel it as a personal pain in their own vitals. Only so can we be on the way of approach to something that rests as an unrelieved weight upon the heart of God,

One further thing is needed to bring us into the realities of the situation, and that is to get the vision of Christ as bearing on His own heart the sorrows and sins of this weary world with all its weight of woe. If once we see His haunting eyes fixed on ours we shall never rest in complacence again. They will never cease to challenge us to our dying day to share with Him His compassion over sinners and His compunction over sin. I had once the inestimable privilege of two hours talk with Studdert-Kennedy when waiting together at a railway station. He told me with his own lips, in a tone of singular passion, how gripped he still was by a vision he had of Christ at the battle of Messines. He was running, he said, towards our lines, half mad with fright, though running in the right direction, through what had once been a wooded copse. It was being heavily shelled. As he ran he stumbled and fell over something. It was the body of an underfed, undersized German boy. He remembered muttering over him, "Poor little devil, what had you got to do with it?" As the fountains of his pity broke, he said there came a light. It may have been pure imagination, but that did not mean it was not also reality, for what is called imagination is often the road to reality. It seemed to him that the boy disappeared and in his place there lay Christ upon the Cross. From that moment (and he said the vision had never faded) he never saw a battle-field as anything but a crucifix. From that time he saw the Cross set up in every slum, in every filthy quarter, in every

vulgar flaring street that spoke of luxury and waste of life. "I see Christ," he went on, "staring up at me from the pages of the newspaper that tells of a tortured, lost and bewildered world. And always from the rising to the setting sun, still hangs my God, calling, calling, calling to men to come out and share His sorrow and help Him save His world."

## CHAPTER II.

### The Issues which present themselves.

#### 1. *Christ or Chaos.*

A Christian society can never afford to forget that its life on this earth is threatened; that deadly and disintegrating influences are always at war with life; that the relationship between the two follow the law of inverse ratio. If the spiritual reality is at the flow, then materialism is at the ebb, the one is constantly being played off against the other. The more vital thing takes command of the situation and makes the other "fetch and carry" for it. When the one is in the ascendancy the other is on the wane.

"You can only counter a passion by a super-passion," and there is no counteractive we can oppose to a surging flood like this, except its spiritual and more powerful opposite—the play of whose forces are always strong or weak in proportion to the lives they sway. Spiritual reality has an ultimate and irresistible urgency at its command, but its way is always conditioned by the responsive action of personal beings.

No easy optimism is sane, since civilization after civilization has gone down under the play of these deadly forces, and it is always only a matter of time, how long an unspiritual commonwealth can hold out against its disintegrating influences. And now a few of the sanest and wisest spirits of our time are not without apprehension lest, to use Dr. Fosdick's phrase, "the footsteps of the pall bearers that have carried out other dead civilizations should be hesitating at our doors."

We are being reminded not by word only but by the pressure of events that "the stage is set for great action." Will the action be forthcoming? or "Will the Galilean once more be too great for our small hearts?" In a world like ours the great things are always being threatened, and never more so than when virtue, living on the accumulated capital of the past, thinks itself safe. The tragic background of our whole earthly life is this—that great gains can never be easily preserved, but may indeed be easily lost. Their whole existence is precarious save as their values are being perpetually re-created. The normal life of the race to the end of time must always reckon on struggle. And to account it as a "walk over" is to set out with unsteady steps upon a slippery slope. Every day is doom's day. Possible doom stares out on us to-day, most certainly, and to avert it every one of us will need to be put upon his mettle. Conventions everywhere are yielding, hoary customs which have kept peoples static are breaking down—everything is unloosed. *We are being called upon to determine*

*whether spiritual or material forces shall rule the world.* Only a Church desperately in earnest and girded for a stiff task and a stern fight can ever be equal to so grave an emergency. "The meeting point of danger and courage," we are told, "is the growing point of the great virtues." That the danger is manifold, all but those with blinded eyes must see. But will the courage be forthcoming? Have we the ardour and the abandon which the hour demands? The balance still swings uncertain.

The stark alternative is a Creative Spiritual Movement or moral and social disintegration.

There is insight rather than pessimism in what the Dean of Canterbury says in *The Impatience of a Parson*: "As I see things, civilization will go down into the abyss within a few short years unless the Church can commend the way of Christ effectively to the heart and conscience of mankind."

Dr. Orchard has been severely rounded by his critics for the frank expression of his fears about the present situation in his book, *The Crisis in Religion,* one critic going so far as to say that there is no crisis in religion, that there never was more religion in the world than there is to-day. He says: "A little forward thinking may save us from the awful experience but it may need a generation of atheism, revolution and chaos to teach mankind where alone its hopes can be realised."

The Dean of St. Paul's, perhaps, holds the balance

as evenly as any—in this matter at any rate—when he declares: "It remains to be seen if civilization is to be ended or mended. The times seem ripe for a new birth of religious and spiritual life which may re-mould society as no less potent force would have the strength to do." "By general consent some religion that can eat up selfishness must prevail. Worldly wisdom and political craft will not suffice," comments another. "A Gospel presents its credentials by the adequacy with which it meets the crisis of a situation." Our Gospel, then, must stand its trial with all things else in this ordeal of our civilization.

### 2. *The Test of a Gospel.*

The price Christianity pays for living in this world is that it is subject to the play of influences which are totally at variance with her true life, and indeed utterly foreign to her. She is always in danger of accepting ideas which are out of affinity with her real nature, and these work their way out, till in crisis they disclose themselves—"their history being their judgment." The inoculation of these ideas tends to a false and unreal life. Now, we are coming to see in these days that the final test of an assumed "gospel" is not in the way in which it approves itself to our abstract thinking but by the way it proves its touch with spiritual reality in the critical business of living. Whilst it is true that "the mind cannot rest in an

incoherence" that must not be taken to imply that what admirably rounds off the fine curve of our thinking is therefore true to spiritual reality. It may be true to spiritual reality so far as we have experienced it, but that affords no final test. That is not said to discourage the habit of thoroughness in thinking but to insist that there must be constant interaction between the world of thought and the realm of action, and facts must be given a chance to speak for themselves. Modern psychology has supplied us with the caution that as likely as not some part of our thinking is not an evaluation of truth but an evasion of it. The crisis that is upon us forces us "to try out our gospels," since it is action alone that validates thought.

There are few principles accepted with more whole-heartedness to-day than that "A thing is what it does"; not what we say it is—our formulary may be wrong; not what we think it to be—our prejudices may have led us astray. Not what we think it is but "what it does" counts. There is little room for error here—taking "What it does" in the largest possible sense. Jesus would have acknowledged this principle. A quite frequent reply to those who sought to know was: "Proceed," act it out, that will give you the clue. The name of Israel's God as disclosed to Moses hints at the same principle. "I will be what I will be," meaning, as I take it, "My action is my people's history and experience, it will give the answer to 'Who I am.'" In the history of the Christian Faith, Revelation came by action—through the redeeming

action of Christ's Living and Dying and Rising: "*The Life was the Light of Men.*"

So the proposition has a good deal to support it. A gospel, we hold, finds its true credentials, not in its ideas alone, however consistently they may be formulated, but it must finally stand or fall by the effectiveness with which it operates in the actual practice of life; by the way, particularly, in which it meets and masters a situation in the recurring crises of life.

The general acceptance of the principle of development as the Divine method of Creation has had a revolutionary effect upon the thought-forms in which we clothe spiritual truth. In its passion to show continuity and to establish unity, evolutionary thought always is in danger of blurring great differences. In evangelical experience antithesis stand out strongly, and thought inadequately steeped in experience is always in peril of levelling down these distinctive things. The whole process unless carefully watched tends as one might say, "to fit a man to his clothes." Dr. Chalmers of New Guinea used to tell of a native who found a pair of shoes on the beach of one of the South Sea Islands, and proceeded to make them fit by cutting off his toes. It is not possible from the point of view of time to bring into synthesis the truths say of Immanence and Transcendence, or to put into any manner of formulation the means by which Reality can reveal itself within the conditions of what is relative. We do know, however, in the creative experience of Grace, that we

take soundings in what is final, but to transcribe that experience so as to make it seem convincing in the terms of any logical system, is beyond us. We refuse however to let our experience be explained away. Forgiveness received at the Cross has ultimate differences which clang out in a defiance which cannot be conciliated, and to submit to the smoothing down of such differences at the call of the abstract mind is to invert the true order of life and thought.

### 3. *The need for "the higher dimension."*

Associated with the disposition to make thought dominant and to ignore distinctions which do not fit our formulations is the tendency, everywhere manifest, to "make man the measure of all things." To the first claim that "the rational is the real" we oppose the proposition—which must always gather its real force from demonstration in terms of spiritual life—that "The real is the religious." To the second claim, that the level of the earth is our standard and that life must submit to the test of the horizontal and utilitarian, we oppose the proposition, the convincing force of which also rests on the evidence of spiritual power—that the arch of the sky is our symbol, the new life of Christ is our norm and the grace flowing to us in Him and through His spirit is our new measure of power. When "the higher dimension" is omitted a long train of devitalizing influences ensue. The sense

of the mystery and majesty of God is dimmed—and it is our thought of Him determines thought of all else. The obligation of submission is ignored and rapture drops out of worship. We make false identifications between Religion and "our higher nature." We falsely identify the Christian salvation with our own "marshalling of the inherent forces of our nature," whereas our life rests upon "the given" and not upon "the self grown." The whole sense of God as having "taken sides," thrown His weight into the human situation, cut into the current of time, by His redeeming energies making His life available for us—all this is but dimly conceived or else omitted altogether. The balance of things—for those who see things so—is still against us, we are not "on top." There is no new world coming in to redress the balance of the old. And so God is still largely an abstract noun to us, awe is missing, amazement is lost. God is like the small dot above the human "i"—an inference of thought, a projection of consciousness, not an experience of life. Such a conception has not "the chill off it." "He scattereth His snow like morsels; who can stand before His cold?"

What is familiarly known as the social Gospel tends not infrequently to miss this higher dimension, so rendering itself for any permanent service inert. Whenever there is the principle of interaction in life, there is always the peril of misconstruing the relationship, and "*getting things in reverse.*" And of course if we are experiencing the full swell of the world of sense about us, and not actually

getting any "surge" from the eternal world in our consciousness, or getting it but feebly or forbiddingly, then it stands to reason that poised as we are between the two worlds our postulates will not favour the "spiritual." For there is no possible escape in the last analysis from "*inferring ourselves*." Postulates always rest back upon experience and take their range and measure from what is "realised." If then the spiritual world is "just a rumour," or if it is "the next world" rather than "the real world," the logic of the situation is that—"making the most of here and now"—"one world at a time and this one first," would be the principle underlying our estimates and our efforts. It is only as a creative spiritual experience opens to us the life that lies behind time and sense—behind this world's pageantry and lure—that the present with its easements and comforts takes on its true proportions and bulges and bulks less before our vision. The depth and reality of our experience of the spiritual world is always the crux. When it becomes the world where we live, the two worlds are set in their right relationship with each other. They each have their place, but the spiritual is the true dominant and in the purpose of God is intended to overflow towards the world of time and sense, setting its standards, breaking its lure, transferring its zest and eagerness towards it in order to transform it. The rich full round of social life comes to its own as it honours its true dominant; through submission it comes to rich, rare strength.

### 4. *Gospel Substitutes.*

The disappearance of the old background and the passing of many of the ancient sanctions has left an opening for a good deal of adventuring in the department of new Gospel making. This tendency to experimentation has been greatly fostered by a considerable number of influences all moving in the same direction, as for instance the general unsettlement of the times, the non-creative life in the Churches, the rise too of the New Psychology and its discoveries regarding the border line of consciousness and the potent part played in life by the subconscious, together with the rapid spread of new and ill-digested ideas. It is inevitable that in the generation suffering from rapidly recurring shocks of change, with life all foreground and no background, that until a new creative experience of spiritual reality is granted to us half-truths will claim the name and wear the label of final truth. So we have New Thought Movements and Christian Science, the tendencies of both being to sacrifice difference in the interest of Unity and to take the sharp edge off the painful experiences of life by the process of absorbing them in some new synthesis of the mind—like "The All." To secure the synthesis, however, some part of reality is sacrificed. The movements have been described as respectively "The fascination of Pantheism" and "The flight from the Cross." Then we have Gospels which exploit the realm of haze we call "The Occult." Spiritualism—or

Spiritism as it is more truthfully named—has had great vogue by reason of the uneasiness and uncertainty with which human souls peer beyond the barriers of time and the grave and by its claim to discover not as a rumour, but as an authentic fact, the tidings of the Unseen World. Spiritualism has been described as "The Protest against Death." Other Gospels, like Russellism—and there are many others of the order—rest upon a haphazard, magical, and unscientific view of Holy Scripture. They read into it "A Plan for the Ages," and claim direct illumination for the discovery of the clue to mystic figures, cryptic numbers and the rest. It represents "the lure of Apocalyptic." It witnesses to the peril of leaving out the intelligence in Religion and to the danger of neglecting to present the Bible in its true setting.

The rapid spread of these half-faiths has its salutary word for us. A movement advances more by the element of truth it contains than by its admixtures of error. There is a dynamic quality of a kind in them all. They only use a broken rod, the ends of which pierce the hands of those who hold it, but they have something to show. The Egyptians, you remember, did the same things with their enchantments. The true demonstration of superior power in the operations of the wonder-working rod was that "the rod of God swallowed up all the rest."

Each of these new faiths witnesses to some neglect of ours, to some truth of God we have not proceeded with or practised. Christian Science, for example,

has something to show, or it would soon have nothing to say. It may not present the lame man healed but it does give witness to nervous wrecks renewed. To say, when you feel pain, "It is not there, I draw my breath from the eternal," seems to us, maybe, like trying "to satisfy thirst from a mist," but it serves the situation of the moment better than raising a lament. Better live with a deceived but earnest Christian Scientist than with a morose Christian. Oliver Wendell Holmes told us he intended becoming a minister but he was "put off it" by coming to know one who always suggested to him the undertaker.

How sedulously too they maintain their technique, whilst ours, as Dr. Fosdick was reminding us recently, has broken down. Spiritism may tend to rack the nerves of people in this hectic age as much as Christian Science seems to repair them, and so to some extent they cancel each other, but at least it practises and it is zealous to make proselytes. Besides it does focus in its vision the havoc wrought by death and in its own way tries to minister comfort. For Christian people to "go out of practice" always opens the door to the quack. The Spiritual Healing movement reminds us of our neglect to assert the supremacy of the spirit over the body, even as the New Thought, with another kind of emphasis claims that "Thoughts are things." Even Russellism can "give us points" in tireless Bible reading. The habit—soon to be revived we trust—has meanwhile broken down so seriously that many of our Scriptural allusions

entirely lose their significance for many of our people.

It is a fact well worth noting in putting a Gospel to its proof that dynamic power always associates itself with difference, whilst inertia consorts with sameness. It was this sense of the truth of things that led Baron von Hügel so constantly to insist that in religious experience we must always "keep the poles alive." In the physical world it is strongly marked polarity which holds the material fabric together and the same holds good in the spiritual life. Its unity rests upon the intensity of its differences. All naturalized faiths are afflicted with inertia, as with a deadly toxin. They possess neither awe nor amazement, nor indeed even the semblance of authority. God is conceived through the taste rather than through the conscience. It is the kind of religion which never commits any one to anything. It is weak in its pulses and unadventurous in its spirit, it has no imperative and is as flat if one may say so, as the "near-beer" in Prohibition America of which the negro said: "It looks like beer, it tastes like beer, it smells like beer, but when it gets down inside, it ain't got no authority."

These Gospels with the "Go" left out of them would be seen for what they were if these were days of richer evangelical experience—but as things are they pass muster. Contrasts are not noticed when the light is dim.

What crucially tests a Gospel is where its weight rests, whether its experiences are viewed as attain-

ments or obtainments, and on which side the onus lies. "There's all the difference in the world," as Dr. Maltby says, "between our effort with God's help and God's grace with our consent." A young fellow I heard of was anxious to see whether he could plough a straight furrow, and asked the farmer if he could try. He appeared at the end of a five minutes' effort with his face all red with the tension of the experience. Addressing the farmer he enquired how he had done. "Not so bad for a first try, only you should let the horse do the pulling." And a good deal of strain and sombreness enters into the religious life because we want to do God's part for Him. As if a man should endeavour to create his own sunshine—instead of keeping himself in it. No wonder, in George Macdonald's words, "We stand with such shadowed faces outside the everlasting doors." He himself once bore the shadowed face until, as he says, "It dawned on him that he had been trying to work up faith instead of contemplating the truths of the Gospel which produce faith."

### 5. *Unbalanced Gospels.*

It is a sobering reflection on the "unstable equilibrium" of human nature—and incidentally a witness to man's inability to rest in anything less than "the whole"—to recall how difficult it is "to correct an exaggeration without exaggerating the correction." On the Continent there is proceeding a movement of reaction against the

horizontal tendency in religion. It bears the name, "The Theology of Crisis." In this movement the pendulum swings violently over to the other side. Man, so far from treating God as on a parity with him is appalled by the manifestation of His "otherness" and lies prostrate before Him in unrelieved despair. God's relationship to man is represented by sheer vertical lines. Tremendously impressed by the reproach cast upon truth by the doctrine of Immanence, it refuses to recognize it. It does not seek to strike a balance ; accommodation has been too costly a procedure in the past ; Eternity and Time must have no common term. God stands over against man, whilst man falling to God's feet "as one dead" misses the word that bids him "stand upon his feet." It does not seek to furnish a basis of kinship, and an order of fellowship. There is neither nearness nor affinity between the Creator and His creatures. Reason has no status nor competency in the religious realm, nor does it act the part—as we believe it ever should—as "counterpoise" and "balance" in the situation. "Life is at odds with Logic, and Faith is at odds with Reason." Unfortunately for this movement so right in its passion to bring in the higher dimension—we find that the complementary side of things so rigorously denied comes in to claim its just treatment. We cannot, whilst human nature remains what it is, a thing of dynamic character, ever omit from our reckoning the satisfaction of any God-given craving without suffering in some way or other distortion.

Another "Gospel" which is represented in the homeland of this vertical type—which likewise suffers from distortion through the truth it denies—is that religion which in the supposed interests of the "spiritual" must needs suspect the "natural" in its forms of the love of beauty, and the sweetly human arts. Many of the noblest souls the world has ever known—the Puritans for example—have tended to fall into this error. Isaac Watts, perhaps, embodies the view of this school best in a couple of lines belonging to a hymn he wrote after having suffered a serious love disappointment. He wrote: "We should suspect some danger near, When we possess delight." The whole perversion arises from conceiving of spirituality in too narrow a way, as though it is a thing by itself, associated with certain offices and ordinances and days and habits, rather than a new creative quality of life which makes personality new in all its range of outlook and intelligence and social relationship and nature kinship. This wrongly conceived "spirituality" leads almost necessarily to the view that the true antidote to secularization is a separation which is more physical in its character than anything else. It also develops censoriousness and contentiousness of temper making the ancient jibe, "the spiritual man is mad," all too wounding in its sting. There is not the slightest doubt that those narrow in their view of the spiritual have done a great deal in the world, but when one thinks of the thousands who have been turned aside from the truth because of the false character of the narrowness, one is

made to pause. I think it would not be difficult to go through many scores of instances like those of George Eliot, Edmund Gosse, Jerome K. Jerome, and a host of others, where the after-history of aversion to, or unbelief in, the Christian faith, has been due in a very large measure to the revolt of God-given human sensibilities which were made to cry out by the pressures and prescriptions of an unenlightened and narrow spirituality.

The "horizontal" Gospel makes no real touch with God and suffers from inertia. It is under-capitalized and has no resources for any great venture. This "gospel" eats out its heart, feeds on its own vitals, and so has no irresistible might in it; like the cistern water collected from surrounding surfaces, it has no "leap" in it and no strong pulse; like the canal whose waters give witness to the low levels from which it is fed by the languor with which it drags itself along. The "horizontal" in the fullest range of its bounds is a "proximate," its "pipe lies short of the fountain" of the Spiritual Ultimate.

The "vertical" Gospel has real touch of a kind with God, but views Him too impersonally. It has failed to sense the truth so passionately preached by Oman in *Grace and Personality*, that Grace by its nature and by reason of its aims cannot come upon us with such irresistible precipitancy as to overthrow the truly personal character of the life it is out to foster and sustain. Otto makes—as I feel all Christian people must make—the "vertical" his central line, stressing the "other-

ness " of God and our true " creatureliness." That line, first drawn in Israel's life, led to her becoming the religious genius of history. The Greeks put in first the " horizontal " and never rose to true religious insight. The inertia which resides in equality is illustrated in them.

The fact about the Half-Gospels is that whichever line is drawn first the other must complete it or remain a distortion. The creative life of God in the experience of man stresses the truth of both the " vertical " and " horizontal," and by an intensification of each brings both into a unity and a true wholeness of life.

## CHAPTER III.

### "Thou Ailest here."

#### 1. *No Oil in our Vessels.*

WE turn now to examine a little more closely the Church, and to see how it bears itself as a Gospel Community. The crux of the situation —as we said—always lies here. And truth to say the Church at the moment is "in straits"; no good can come of denying it. Not even the most sanguine of us can claim that we are matching the hour, or serving the situation. On the strength of our present resources we shall never evangelize our age. We are confronted by demands we cannot meet. What is the situation then more particularly and what are we to do?—placed as we are here "in trust with the Gospel" in face of the world's deep need, and in face of the world's dark peril.

How easily one thing puts another wrong in the delicate mechanism of Christ's life! As Dr. Maltby puts the situation: "There is no doubt there has been a real arrest of religion and a great decline in our sense of God, and this has made all our problems immensely difficult."

And it is the crisis always that brings out so patently the shortage. The midnight cry reveals the situation's desperation "no oil in the vessels." The ten virgins all seemed alike until the crisis came. They all had lamps in their hands, garlands on their heads, and songs on their lips. They all seemed indistinguishably the same. But under the apparent resemblances, it was the absence or the presence of the oil that made the difference. Respectability resembles goodness—but the real distinction is that one has "the holy oil" and the other has not. The one has a secret resource the other lacks. The crisis brings out the difference.

Indifference and holy calm are very much alike. It is the critical situation that reveals the one to be a "peace the world giveth," and the other a "peace Christ gives."

So in the crisis we cannot "stand up to it." We are bewildered, crestfallen, ashamed. But our hope is in "feeling the reproach." Our prospects would brighten at once if we "cried out"—into the right ears, haunted by the contrast between our name ("Bethesda, Bethlehem, Bethel"—House of healing, house of bread, house of God)—and our "straits." This friend of ours in the world has wandered and he comes knocking outside at our door. What have we to set before him. These "crippled" souls, come resting by our waters, but there is no "stirring" of them for their healing, and there is no one to help them in.

So then we are in "a low way," we speak in

" our poorly voice," far from being impressive, we are *cut off from all our resources—save God.*

Would that we, together, would throw ourselves on our infinite reserves, " *Playing our resources against our fears,*" laying help upon " One that is mighty."

## 2. *Our Substitutions.*

For the present, however, we seem to be busiest along the line of what the psychologists call " substitution." We are endeavouring to satisfy along other paths our thwarted spiritual instincts. Having been tamed out of all recognition by the routine of institutional religion we seek to get our adventurous impulses satisfied in other ways. In one section of the Christian Church we tend to get " ritual substitution." In the absence of spiritual realization, " form " in one way or another is bound to gain the upper hand. In the absence of creative life we elaborate our rubric. Any thrill is better than none when things get flat. In Churches more like those of our own order we develop what Watson the Behaviourist would call " the habit of language." We fob off ourselves with words. We develop the slack mouth and the roving eye of the born talker. *Seeing we cannot be creative we become reiterative instead.* This habit language tends to grow by what it feeds on. We often " argue the point " over a matter in which the only honourable thing

to do would be "to take up an attitude to it." Even God may come to mean nothing to us but "a name" framed upon the pouch of our lips. Kegan Paul once said a cutting thing of Andrew Lang: "There was a time when he had something to say, now he has to say something."

How liable we are in our holy office to "but festoon the porch of things," to "construct our elaborations" instead of "elaborating our constructions." "The evangelical preacher is always standing on the edge of an abyss." In the emotional life he is tempted to simulate emotions he does not at the moment feel. He stands there, also in the temptation which constantly comes to him, to use unrealizingly—not to say glibly—the great words of the Christian Faith. A Quaker Meeting House has sometimes its attractions after our deluge of talk—but only because the talking is so often a substitute for the deed. It was in this sense and only in this sense that we are to understand the elder Pitt's outburst at the Duke of Newcastle, "Fewer words, my lord, for your words have long lost all weight with me." Speech is a hallowed medium accompanied by "the deed;" it is a hollow mockery without. On the other hand some Churches are losing all power to testify. The best friends of the Churches unite in wishing that our fine young people would let their voice be heard—particularly in the public devotions of God's house. We seem to be heading for an inarticulate order of religious life. There are surely better ways of

combating an abuse than by abstention. All life's "offices" would be under notice of vacation if that principle ruled. Dr. Lynn Hough, in an article on Dr. Dale, suggests the better way. Of Dale he says: "He found a life in the things of religion—and then he found a voice." When religion becomes more creative it will in becoming vital be vocal.

The absence of a creative spiritual life tells against us badly too in the "imitative poverty" it induces in the life of the spirit of the Church. We become the slaves of routine, and the shadows of our former creative selves. The quickening of the spiritual life of man always issues in a greater adaptiveness and mobility of life and thought. Revival times in the Church are the times of its true genius. Even the greatest spirits lapse into commonness when the tides of life ebb. Sara Coleridge said of the old age of Wordsworth: "He seems rather to re-continue his former self and to repeat by habit what he once used to think and feel rather than speak what he thinks and feels now." It seems to be a great principle of life that only as the creative spirit comes upon us are we delivered from the tyranny of our repetitive selves and are able to "do as occasion serves."

Dr. Newton Flew raises an interesting question where, in an essay of his, he quotes Dr. Gwatkin's memorable words about the difference between the apostolic age and the sub-apostolic: "There is no contrast in literature more astonishing than that between the creative richness of the apostolic age

and the imitative poverty of the age which followed." And then he makes this significant comment: "It is impossible to say at what point men first begin to lose their sense of God. The Christian Church is always in danger of losing God when it is content to offer to Him the obedience to which it is accustomed rather than the fresh ventures of faith to which it is called."

It is a most disconcerting observation for us in this hour of crisis. As I read it, it means that whilst we need to possess creative life in order to be adventurous, we also need to be adventurous—in obedience—in order to be creative. That principle will apply to what I hope to say later.

### 3. *The Ebb-tide begets problems.*

Most of our problems in Church life to-day are problems of the ebb-tide. We cannot get the "flow" however hard we try—and indeed the flow won't come by our trying. It comes by an invasion of the life of man from the side of God. Matthew Arnold, in his poem *Dover Beach*, pictures the sea of Faith as "once at the full" but now:

> "I only hear
> Its melancholy long withdrawing roar
> Retreating to the breath
> Of the night wind . . . . ."

When we are "bound in shallows" we lose, because we cannot launch our ventures. It is so

difficult to "get a move on" when the tide is out. The Church is never impressive and always seems to be suggestive of irrelevance when the tides of the Spirit have ebbed. It seems such a huge hulk of a thing to be kept going save as is borne majestically and buoyantly on the flood tide.

The machinery is necessarily huge and complex in so large an undertaking as ours. It goes smoothly and musically when the water is flowing strongly towards us, but it becomes an intolerable burden and grinds horribly when the "flow" is stayed. Many heroic and loyal souls are wearing themselves out in the Church to-day merely to keep the machinery going. We are engaged in a task utterly beyond our powers except as we live happily in the consciousness of a Divine fellowship. We are under-capitalized for our great venture except as we regain the resources of the "exceeding riches of His grace" and "the exceeding greatness of His power."

An "ebb-tide" habit of ours is to take our width out of our depth. The social expression of Christianity is one of its many and much-needed functions—of which more will be said later. But in times of low spiritual power "The Church"—as Prof. J. G. McKenzie remarks—"may function as a social institution long after the vital experience which gave it birth has exhausted itself."

The Church to-day has a very large Annexe. And none too large, perhaps, if its creative vitality was greater. We can have our "wing"—two if need be—if they help us to fly. If they are amenable to the life within, if they are permeated by the

spiritual vigour of the centre, we cannot have too many adjuncts. But always, providing that the central life is maintained vigorously and functions through them. The proviso is often disregarded, with the result—pretty general just now—that the social function is regarded by many as the primary rather than the secondary interest of the organism. One of the most odious of our duties as Christian ministers is to oppose the lengthening of cords which might with perfect legitimacy be extended if only the peril could be avoided of pulling up the stakes. Until Church Life shows more creative vigour and we are "most in the main things" it is at the peril of our life that we make the "substitution" of "being busy here and there." Dr. Fosdick's words carry with them—as they so frequently do—a needed reminder. "If you add strain, you must increase staunchness. To lengthen our cords is to give more purchase to the wind. We enjoy a greatly extended freedom. Each new freedom requires in us some new firmness. . . The lengthened rope tends to pull on the stakes." I recall, too, many a wise word of Dr. Hutton's to the same effect—a word that needs to be proclaimed by the bellman in the street as by the preacher in the pulpit. "Every new release we permit ourselves must be accompanied by some new strictness and restraint."

There is another kind of "breadth" which may be taken out of our depth, which may be illustrated by a remark Carlyle made in regard to an interruption in his work he had suffered through a call

which Harriet Martineau had made. "She left me," he says, "with my hand all thrown out." Much of the work we need to do in the days of "ebb-tide" is of that character. The work of organizing the inevitable bazaar, the securing of artists for the winter concerts is not perhaps uncongenial work in so far as it provides contacts which may be made sweetly and wholesomely human, and so evangelized. Sometimes, however, the late Saturday concert and things of that order make one very well able to appreciate Carlyle's murmur about "having his hand thrown out." We do not make a complaint of this ourselves at the moment. No good comes of the mere treatment of symptoms. Our people in the main have never known the rapture of the creative life—and so "substitution" of this or of some other order is almost inevitable. As Evelyn Underhill has it: "No one knows Grace till he tastes it." Dr. Forsyth has a booklet on *The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace.* A second might fittingly be written on *The Taste of Grace and the Death of the Meagre Life.* It is the meagre life denoting the absence of the taste of grace that worries us so much to-day; in other words "The Ebb-tide." You may bring in 10,000 horses and chariots and not succeed in giving a returning pulse to the sea. You must bring in the pull of the sky for that.

### 4. *The need for Vision.*

All kinds of fine discriminations are waiting to be

made if only we had a more spiritualized intelligence. Even the humblest spiritual practitioner amongst us can discriminate between the healthy coursing of the blood and the vicious throbbings of an ulcer. Another somewhat finer discrimination (and there are others which may be mentioned later) is that between the normal and healthy growths in the Church organism and those uncontrolled growths which, while in the body, yet live an independent life of their own. The problems of discipline in Church life cluster thickly and burningly just here. The whole question of the treatment of these things by surgery, or by X rays : the question of what is a vicious growth and must be removed and what is comparatively innocuous ; the question of the application of the words of Jesus in connexion with these things, " let both grow together," and many another such as what Dr. Burgess calls " the new technique of approach," has all its bearings on our Church situation. And what concerns me to say most just now is that at " ebb-tide " discrimination in these things is usually very faulty and all kinds of problems arise which in Flood Tide would be discerned at once for what they are.

The feeble pulse of spiritual life affects the finer discriminations of our vision in other ways than in the problems of discipline. There are few greater or more perplexing questions at this moment of crisis than that of distinguishing between a true development of our Christian Faith and what represents a departure from it. The place of Holy Scriptures as marking the Infallible Way to God,

as the Indispensable Source of our knowledge of the Christian Faith and the Indispensable Means for the cultivation of the Christian Soul is what we claim for it with our whole soul and mind; but when what seem to be impossible claims are made for the Sacred Writings which cannot frankly bear the light of really assured knowledge a serious situation is created. A Christian never needed more than to-day the full use of his spiritualized intelligence, for the crisis is such that personalities as vital in mind as in soul are needed to take in the manifold factors that make up the whole problem. We are dealing with men, often, who can laugh out of countenance, almost, those who advance impossible claims, and in the judgment of these our adversaries—wrongly of course, as we think—a man has forfeited his right to be heard who fails to make certain admissions of legitimacy in respect of the operation of mental processes and research in their appropriate spheres. Other distinctions not well and truly made—between Faith and Reason for instance—all hamper our effectiveness in "serving the situation" before us. And the point I would make once more is that the absence which embarrasses us most is the absence of a rich Creative Life which would fertilize the intelligence and clarify the spiritual and mental vision. We have a great faith that the next vital spiritual movement will produce such issues that "Mind and soul, according well, may make one music as before—but vaster."

### 5. *"What hast thou in thine house?"*

We swing round at this point to view the situation existing in the Church from the angle of the menace which threatens us from without.

Hezekiah, good man though he was, had no real sense of the situation in which he stood. He had had his life lengthened without having his vision clarified. All unrealized by him, "the coming power," Babylon, was casting its eyes his way. It stood "in the offing" for the moment and adopted an ingratiating manner. It sent letters of condolence to Hezekiah expressing sympathy, having heard that he was sick. And Hezekiah "hearkened to them"—took it all in, gulped it down, flattered by the attentions paid to him.

One thing led to another and soon the king was "opening out" towards the men to whom he should have shown himself "close." He laid bare his treasure, little realizing that the generations following would see these "precious things" in Babylon's hands. So ingratiating did Babylon become, and so "unsighted" was Hezekiah, that there was nothing in his house, nor in all his domain, that he showed them not.

Little did he realize it, but here was a search party scrutinizing all his estate, not with the intention of falling down in amazement at it all as did the Queen of Sheba, "there being no spirit left in her," but with the secret intention of making capital for themselves out of it all.

But these things, meanwhile, were "hid from his

eyes." It was only when Isaiah flamed with anger at the utter senselessness of the procedure in thus giving a handle to the enemy that Hezekiah's eyes dropped and the infatuation ended.

Now the situation, as presented by the menace confronting us, is very well represented in that story.

The Sciences are "the Coming Power," if they are not that already. Their passion is to scrutinize. Everything in heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, are the subjects of their "all-seeing eyes." Their insatiable longing is to "hold all the keys" and snatch from every realm the "secret" and hold it as their own, by right of conquest. It sends its letters to the Church, condoling with it in its incapacity and sickness of heart. Secretly it says, "Its days are over," though they may, perchance, be lengthened a little out of respect of her glorious but now fading power. Actually they have already "prepared the cooked meats" for her funeral, having, in anticipation, seen her laid low. The Church's previous enemies (like Assyria) have "wounded her sore," but already the dart is ready labelled that will spill her blood. It is nothing to the point that many darts labelled in the same way lie broken about. Materialism almost succeeded. It invested us and besieged us till we cried out, but like Sennacherib's hosts it heard a rumour that the ground was not solid beneath its feet, and it fled. But the same overbearing attitude has now been taken up by a "new rising power," the "new

psychology," and, of course, there can be only one end to the struggle, especially when Applied Science and the new temper of Secularization ally their forces for the struggle!

Indeed we have been unwise through not living according to the true genius and law of Creative Experience. We have "opened ourselves" to the enemy by taking up many a false position, and only "the logic of events" and the "pressure of crisis" has disclosed to us our folly. The history of many centuries is eloquent of the fact that the Church of Jesus has not fully known "the law of her own life." When she has claimed freedom as at the Reformation she failed to envisage her life with her Lord as "fully personal" and therefore "communal." She took "private" to be a synonym for "personal." Over and over again she has taken up untenable positions in respect of her authority, her documents and her faith, disclosing herself in wrong ways to the world. Valiant she has been, with a valiancy not unmixed with obstinacy—identifying principle with prejudice not infrequently—but too often she has been without vision. Crises have arisen in which she has shown both her best side and her worst. How often in that long, glorious, and yet grim story have we done like the novice with his wireless, got our "primary" circuit across our "secondary" and wasted our valves.

We point out these blemishes only as one would touch with delicacy the "faded cheek of one's mother." Not by any means to disclose the fact

of failing power to those who would " make capital " of her debility. We are " all in the same condemnation " and, without realizing it we have " nailed " to the Cross our wounded, suffering, and long-suffering Lord.

This age, as no other, is an age of the dominance of mind. The mind of man at the moment can set no limits to its range. It can be readily understood, therefore, how with such conquests to its credit it takes up an overweening attitude towards the spiritual facts which present themselves to it. It is to our shame that this is a possible attitude for men of science to take up. Our claims are exceedingly difficult to even name, much less substantiate. For example, take the claim, " The spiritual man has the key to all things and no one has the key to him "—with Science standing with the keys of knowledge in her hand. Truly enough he envisages, the One who has all the keys upon His Girdle ; One upon whose vesture and thigh (the symbol of His creative energy and of His mobility) are written, " King of kings and Lord of lords " : but then if the acid test which Science applies is that " A thing is what it does "—ah, dear, " What scanty triumphs grace has won." Applied Science and Modern Thought are stalking like a great Goliath, his voice reverberating like thunder through the valley we Christian people call " this vale of soul making." And we have all been in danger of suffering a little from " nerves," as, say the modern Goliaths—typified shall we say by Mr. Bertrand Russell, Mr. H. G.

Wells, and Mr. Arnold Bennett—have roared out their blustering defiances of the army of the Living God. Too long we have hidden our diminished heads and "caved in" in our degenerate hearts. But not much longer!

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Arrest of Evangelism.

#### 1. *Revivals may be incomplete.*

THE overweening attitude towards Evangelical Religion, and indeed Revealed Religion of any kind, was largely due to our own lack of a rich and creative experience—a first-hand and self-authenticating knowledge of God. It was due also to a want of spiritualized intelligence which would lead us to discriminate between things that differ, such as essentials and non-essentials, the life and the form, the seminal and the inert, the verbal and the vital, the experience and its expression, in our Christian Faith and Gospel. The new knowledge of '59 and the '59 Revival had a Providence, we doubt not, in their coincidence. In the light of what has happened since it seems a Providence but "partly understood." The outburst of a new life became a fine counterpoise to the outbreak of the new knowledge of God's method in His Creation—the same Providence being at work, as I believe, in both, though on a different strata of reality. The heart of man was enraptured and steadied as the

great new knowledge came more as a blow than as a shaft of light to his mind.

But what, in the light of later events, seemed called for from Christian folks in that hour of crisis, was to use the new experience of grace not only as a counterpoise to the enlightened mind but as the vitalizing principle of a larger correlation of "mind and soul according well." We missed that great opportunity. We were perhaps hardly free enough to seize it. When your hand is full of "thirty-nine articles" it is difficult to grasp anything more, even if it be a God-given opportunity. Likely, too, no age can ever really see a new thing in all its bearings. It is said to take at least a generation before thoughtful people get the range of a fresh truth, and a second generation is needed to enable it to percolate through to non-thinking folks. The Evangelical Revival and the Industrial Revolution were co-incident. The Revival furnished the most notable "counterpoise" that history knows; and besides it was in the van in the earliest steps taken in correlating the Creative Life of God in the soul of man, with the larger life in society. The Evangelical Revival brought with it a wonderfully freshened sense of social values. Had it gone farther and adventurously correlated its new life—through an evangelized intelligence—with the industrial situation and not have suffered, without protest, the widely drawn inference of the Manchester School, that "a man seeking his own enrichment in commerce was automatically and evitably furthering the prosperity of all," we

should not have had our industrial problems to-day in their most vexatious form. But how are we to blame our fathers for want of vision when we only see, in general, "men as trees walking," man in his setting as a part of nature—or man in his abstraction as an "economic unit."

I can never express my indebtedness too greatly for the teaching about being "sanctified wholly" I received from the lips—but especially through the life—of men like Frank W. Crossley and (he would protest against this so-near association of his name with his friend, but he is worthy of it) John B. Bayliffe. Their interpretation of the consecrated life made it impossible for me ever to be content with less than a fully adventurous type of the Christian Faith. But in one's reflection upon it now I see that, for me, a dimension was missing.

If it is true—and it is—that the wholeness of Christian experience is sacrificed whenever the spiritual falls short of a full dominance in the affections; its true wholeness on the side of its expression is sacrificed when the range of that dominion is foreshortened in the intelligence. The wholeness of religious experience and expression may be challenged in its dominancy at the fountain or along its course. And if the saying is true (I think I heard Dr. Hutton utter it) that "It is not what we dedicate that gives us trouble but what we hold back," does it not follow all but inevitably—for me at least—that it is not "the free course" we give to the spiritual in its correlations but their abridgment that is occasioning

so many unhappy and unhealthy "complexes" in personal and communal life to-day. The first trouble may perchance be called—if we use biological terms—"organic," and the second may be called "functional."

"We have all come short." The pity is that different schools of thought are busy pointing out each other's "shortness." The right and left wings indicate the missing segments in the other's circle of truth, whereas on both sides—which one more than the other I dare not say—"We are limiting the Holy One of Israel." The fervent evangelical, with his view of Religious "Holism," stresses "the cleansing of the fountain," and stops there. He comes short. He has done all it was his duty to do—so he thinks. Perhaps it is in a kind of absent-mindedness that he expects "*the rest* to follow." Too frequently "a long rest" ensues, which is neither the "rest of faith" nor the "rest of God," but is—to be brutally frank—"the lounge of self-satisfaction." Often, I say again, the failure is not wilful but is due to the impression that if "Grace reigns" then what more can be needed by any of us to increase its dominion. "Having begun in the spirit"—well, then let us keep there. Perhaps this is hardly a fair description of what generally prevails. The greater number will probably get the point best in a story. I get my own points better there anyhow. F. E. Mathieson, in his *Memoir of Hastings Rashdall,* tells how he once remarked to the Dean that the back wheel of his cycle was deflated. He assented, somewhat

dreamily that this was so, but started blowing up the front one. When Mr. Mathieson pointed this out to him, he said, still dreamily: "Oh! don't they communicate?" I must not dilate on the moral; but when the Church, like the cycle, is deflated, as if by instinct, the typical evangelical will commence with the front wheel, never with the back. I fear in these days more than ever before in our complex age it is the back wheel that lets us down once out of every three or four times.

If God is not to be grieved on another count with this generation we must be fair and lay stress upon the other side of the truth. Archbishop Temple remarks, in speaking of Studdert-Kennedy, "Debate and misunderstanding may arise through a man failing to mention the side of the truth he takes for granted." I should be sorry if I left the impression that I had failed to see that the crux of the situation lies in the heart. To make that doubly sure let me—not tell another story—but illustrate from the frank confession of a virile, intellectual and fervent social worker, how he felt that he had come short. Prof. George Unwin, the Economist, wrote: "If I have not gone through the Christian experience I know why. I have never felt myself capable of entire surrender. It is harder for a man of intellect than for one with riches to enter the Kingdom. We have had visitations like Paul's, but lower in degree. By reason of our analytical faculties (these visitations) are deprived of directness but not of their reality." That is the crux of the situation for by far the

greater majority of us. When, however, the Creative life comes to the heart, which makes all things new, whilst it does not automatically affect the correlations needed, yet it goes a great way to fertilize the intelligence, stimulating it to make them.

As you read over, however, that frank letter again, does it not occur to you that perhaps in another fashion he was trying to inflate, like Dr. Rashdall, the wrong wheel. He was seeking to get the spirit's breath on his heart through his intelligence rather than on his intelligence through his heart. A lot of very brilliant men do that it would seem ; that is perhaps why so often " These things are hid from the wise and prudent—and revealed unto babes."

It has done untold harm to the progress of evangelical religion that spirituality has so often been associated with " a single track mind " or a " one way mind." There is a right and wrong kind of narrowness. A wrongly conceived spirituality has dwarfed and starved many a life. True spirituality is surely that baptism in the Life and Light and Love of God that renews primarily the life of the affections, but also gives creative vigour to the will and to the whole personality, not falling short either of illuminating the whole outlook of the man. We are dealing in spirituality both with what is organic *and* with what is functional. " The secret of all wisdom "—we are told—" is to view all things in relation to the rest." The roots of one emotion lie close to the

roots of another, and all ideas have their emotional tone ; so the Creative Life of the heart is bound to quicken the ideas begotten in the intelligence and should result in a unified as well as a vitalized personality, save as there is some conscious or unconscious impediment in the functional life. We needs must see to it at any rate that our young David does not conceive of spirituality as some "grand isolation." He will not level the Philistines with that stone of his sling. Applied Science on one side in this Vale of Soul-making, swinging its weaver's beam, can only be overthrown by Applied Spirituality on the other. The glorious doctrine of Perfect Love, in the Master's own word about it, was to love the Lord with all the mind as well as with the heart and soul and strength. What a passion Jesus had for "wholeness." Let young David's mind as well as heart be expansive with the Master's wholeness and we shall hear less of the Philistine's boastings in the days of the near future.

A diplomat's confession may just point a complementary warning. "The service of the State," he said, "has spoiled me as a human being." No need to sharpen the point on that.

### 2. *Inoculated against the Gospel!*

We are sometimes told that "we have inoculated the world with so mild a form of Christianity that it is now practically immune against the real

thing." "The tendency of the times is to blur all distinctions, tone down all supremacies, and largely end in a diffused, kindly feeling—in a mush of amiability." The Philistines see to it that they render us innocuous. We lose the power to make men realize the deeper meaning of their uneasy conscience and the unfulfilled hunger of their heart for God. As Dr. Hutton puts it: "We change our voice at the bidding of the world." Seeing the big themes are too disturbing our preaching is of the order Dr. Jackson calls: "the Suburban"; and the finesse, and artifice associated with suburbia characterize our treatment of truth as well. While we are not called upon to violate fine taste in our presentation of the truth, and while we cannot have too much of genuine culture, there is sometimes a very real need of what is "caustic"—though never "vitriolic"—in our preaching. We can appreciate the point of a comment John Wesley makes in his *Journal* anent a visit he once paid to a Socinian Chapel in Norwich where he listened to high-flown ministrations from a progressive pulpit. He left—so he tells us—remarking to himself that "There was more appeal to him in the Old Course Gospel."

The Philistines have taken hold of our word "Fatherhood" and taken all the "temper" out of it. "Fatherhood"—as Dr. Denney remarks in one of his letters—"is so easily naturalized. It needs a corrective or check. This it gets in 'The Kingdom' which cannot be conceived on the basis of nature at all."

We are told to-day how the truth of Fatherhood once accepted must determine the whole of the character of our thinking; it is the Imperial truth to which all beside must bow. We agree, with the proviso, that Fatherhood, which is made Imperial, shall be the Holy Fatherhood as made known to us in Jesus Christ and in the pages of the New Testament. It would seem as if we should seldom or ever use the term Father without the hyphen, Holy-Father or Father-Judge, if we are to keep it true to its Scriptural content and context. The truth of Fatherhood was only reached after centuries of approach and preparation during which the idea of God as King prevailed. The new conception rested not on the ruins of the older idea but upon it as a base. We in the West have not made that long approach, and we lie under the grave peril of blunting the edge of true authority lying in the term and allowing it to soften into "weak amiability." If we really as Christian people worship the one God we must ever know Him as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." A deeper evangelical experience would give the right temper to the great word. We are never in danger of a naturalized Fatherhood so long as we are standing fully within the evangelical truth.

Evangelism is the primary function of the Church. It is no occasional event, no optional interest, no casual extra. It is the necessary function of the organism. As in nature function determines organism, so also does it in the divine organism

we know as the Church. God gets His footing, so to speak, by His Son through His Spirit in the redeemed consciousness of His Church, and works His reconciling purpose out in the race through the mediating and ministering function of the Church's evangelism. To-day, unfortunately, we are witnessing an arrest of evangelism in the Homeland. Its primal cause is the lack of the creative evangelical experience amongst us. When experience weakens, expression lags. There is also an interaction, when the expression lags the experience weakens. " You cannot spiritualise the Church apart from its tasks," is the reminder Dr. Stanley Jones has been giving us lately. The reverse, of course, is always true : " You cannot fulfil your evangelical task (using the word in the widest possible sense) unless you spiritualise the Church." In the actions and reactions of an organism cause and effect are always interchanging places.

That amazingly vital and versatile leader, F. L. Wiseman, in presenting the report of the Committee on Home Evangelism, pointed out some of the features of the present situation of arrested evangelism. " The Church is thinking more in terms of worship than of evangelism," he affirmed. " There is a wonderful change in the context of evangelistic preaching. The doctrine of substitution was powerful in the hands of the preacher at one time, but the awakening is not accomplished in the same way now."

" It is painfully evident "—he proceeded to say—

" that the outsiders are no longer touched in any numbers by special missions—and the methods of calculating results and of dealing with enquirers causes dissatisfaction. . . One of the battles we shall have to fight in the next twenty-five years, and one of the difficulties the preacher will have to face, will be due not to psychology but to bad inferences from psychology." " We have let the initiative pass from us, and it has passed to those who are explaining away the experience of God by rationalism, or to those who are ignoring that experience in secularization." " The new enemy is psychology. It analyses experience and threatens Religion by its assumption that religious experience can be dissipated into subjectivism. The production of Spiritual Reality in unmistakable power in a Creative Evangelical Experience is the only adequate refutation."

Every age must be evangelized to be safe and sound. All progress goes on halting feet, if evangelism does not proceed. If we let our hands grow slack at this work because our hearts grow cold we can never make up what is lost. The processes of life are not stayed because we slacken effort. Evil sheds its tare seeds while men sleep. In the life of the fields any farmer will affirm that " One year's seeding makes ten years' weeding." We have yielded to the spirit of the age as it was inevitable we should do when spiritual passion was at an ebb. Ours has been largely an age of hesitation, rather than of deep concern and resolute act. The " crisis " is waking us up, for an increasing

number of sensitive spiritual people feel that the end of civilization, as we know it, is in sight if this inertia is much more prolonged. Anything is good, meanwhile, that shakes us out of our sleep of complacency and helps us to gather our resoluteness of mind for "the action." Was it not old Dr. Johnson who once said grimly that, "It leads to a great concentration of mind when a man knows he is to be hanged in twenty-four hours." The Unjust Steward, under notice to quit his factorship, immediately managed to undertake a series of self-protective actions on the morning upon which he had to deliver up his books. One can imagine him, under the stimulus of desperation, putting a peremptory note into his voice as he said, "Sit down quickly and write fifty." And the children of this generation can give points in this to the children of light.

### 3. *Have we lost our way?*

There is *the dilemma of having lost our way* in the confusion of the changed situation. Principal Jacks tells of a pedestrian Englishman who had "got wandered" in Connemara. He was on his way to Letterfrack and in his distress approached a genial Irishman who was working near a large bog. Flinging himself out, the Irishman said: "'Tis the devil's own country, sar, to find your way in, but a gintelman with a face like Your Honour's can't miss the road: but if it was m'self

that was going to Letterfrack, bedad, I wouldn't start from here." So many of us are reluctant to start from where we are. "Now if only . . ." commences so many of our sentences which bear our excuses for not starting at once and from where we are on the difficult way. One thing that always pulls me up on the excuse line is a sentence of golden words out of modern psychology: "Our real reason, when excusing ourselves, is not what we state but what our state is." The searching light of the Spirit of God shines upon one's self-excusing habits from a truth like this. If on the one hand the new psychology has tended "to wander" us, it may by the Good Spirit be used to get us away from the bog and on our way to Letterfrack after all. Would it not be an amazing thing (and yet why should not we expect it?) if a Word of God were to come—"quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing even to the sundering of soul and spirit and the joints and marrow" by the mysterious ways of the Spirit through the New Psychology. "Man doth not live by bread alone—but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live."

I am reminded, anent the last tale, of something Walter Lippman says about the well-known American Senator Borah. Of him, Lippman says: "He has a deeply Protestant mind. . . He led the movement against the League of Nations. His mind seizes swiftly upon reasons why anything about to be done should not be done." My!

How many deeply Protestant minds there are amongst us to-day. We need a new Protestant Reformation almost, to reform the Protestants.

Sir James Barrie, in *The Little Minister*, tells of a character of his who intended to cut down a tree but the years sped on and on and he neglected to do it. "I grew old," said he, "looking for the axe."

There is an interesting account given in an adjoining chapter to that which tells of David's exploit with Goliath, of how the Israelites at this time were so overawed by the Philistines that they went from place to place in their own land in terror. And we are told in that connexion that the enemy overbare towards them with such rigour that they forbade the employment of smiths throughout the land so that "all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his axe and his spear." It is to be presumed of course that out of regard to the possible use to be made of these instruments they were careful not to put "too sharp an edge on them." Now the Philistines have largely got hold of our instruments. This is so, for example, as Dr. Moffatt has recently been pointing out, in respect of the cardinal truth of Love. "We speak of Christianity as a religion of Love," and so it is, but we do this without examining our terms. The great word "Love" has lost its Christian "temper." The Philistine has got hold of it and softened it to his liking. The only fire in which one can get the true "temper" into Love is in the fires that flame

in the Cross. That is the temper given to the word in the New Testament. "God is Love, and this is how the Love of God has appeared to us—by God sending His only Son into the world." In other words Love is only truly tempered in the Everlasting Burnings of a Holy Flame and a Sacrificial Fire.

### 4. "*He that doeth shall know.*"

Action will clear our eyes and keep us relevant to life. "Thy work," says George Macdonald, "will clear thine eyes." Readers of Peabody's Morning Chapel Sermons will remember the great use he makes of the comment of the writer of the Fourth Gospel on the turning of the Water into Wine. Those who "sat" at the feast knew nothing of the secret "but the servants that drew the water *knew*." Action illuminates. The great task of the re-statement of Christian Truth into a language understood of the people lies before us. But it will not be done "seated" it can only be done "en route." The doer will find the door. Ideas gain reality for us only as we see something of the range of their application. It is no good if the field needs ploughing "turning it over in our mind." We do not wait by the bank of a stream we want to cross, saying, "I'll think it over." If action lag behind thought we become "thick sighted." We also develop a fatigued way of looking at our task. As we proceed we take many

things in our stride. Facts become faculty, thought becomes vital, hearts become brave. Re-statement will come best out of the realizations begotten of fresh adventure. We cannot re-state anything vital except as we proceed. "Lord, help me," prayed the nigger, and got the reply, "How can I help you? You are doing nothing."

Creative religious experience and adventurous action interact upon each other. As Dr. Stanley Jones would put it: "We have got to hit the problem in two places. Experience and expression are the two sides of the Christian Life and one cannot exist without the other. The two lives feed each other. Kill either, you kill both." As we proceed we shall discover new vitality.

Herbert Spencer called attention to the fact in his day that the different parts of the social organism like the different parts of the individual organism compete for nutriment, and severally obtain more or less according as they are discharging more or less duty. Setting out we shall find ourselves supported from the life of our age.

The Church meanwhile has lost its leadership of the people. We need to make an adventurous bid to recover it by serving the situation. A great Cause will alone keep us relevant to life. The Church can rehabilitate itself in the Life of the age as it proceeds adventurously—and only so. It would gain new authority as it lost its commonness. A fresh adaptability would develop as a more creative and adventurous life became hers. She would be seen to be less self-preserving as she

set herself for "the Kingdom" goal. Failing such an adventurous move, "We look like having a bankrupt theology and the derelict Church."

"We solve our problems as we proceed," seems to be the real heart of the present situation of crisis, just as long ago it seems to have been young David's faith in his great adventure. How repeatedly in John Wesley's *Journal* we get the entry: "I set out." This is the idea we must get hold of: "Our real faith is not what we say, but that upon which we habitually proceed." We set out "playing our resources" against our responsibilities, as also against our fears. Real faith always asks: "What is the operative clause?" If we Churchmen were half as anxious about "procedure" in the evangelization of the homeland as we are over the "procedure" which is but the order of our business in Committee we should soon see a change wrought over our Island. The hour has struck for a New Romanticism in Evangelism, and its motto will be: "By the splendour of God we proceed." We shall take circumstances into our hands and bend the situation to our will, when and as we set out.

At the General Assembly of one of the Scottish Churches a few years ago the Moderator uttered this most challenging word: "We have heard," he said, "of the Church struggling for its life in the modern world. Let it struggle for the world's life and its own life is secure." Action like that would break the "complex" in the life of the world to-day in respect of the Church. The ideal of the Kingdom will save it, and nothing else can.

In the experience we should discover such resiliency as will throw up Leaders, but best of all we shall realize afresh the wonder of Christ, "The Ever-coming One." It would be ten thousand pities if we were to miss the significance of what is really happening. The Son of man in a very deep sense returns with every crisis, and in wistfulness seeks to find "Faith on the earth."

In the coincidence of events He is here. We are being "steered secretly" through the straits of these critical times. We are getting "the shadow signs," as Dr. Hutton puts it, "that God means something by us." He would not have brought us thus far to put us to shame.

I often am helped to sense the really salient fact in the present situation by a story Prof. A. J. Gossip tells. As a Chaplain in Passchendaele the troops were enjoying a short respite in the spring-time at the Rest Camp, after a terrible winter in the frost and cold and mud of the front lines. The birds were singing and the buds were bursting: all nature was "breaking forth into joy," when in the midst of it all the order came to "go back." All hearts were heavy at the prospect, and Mr. Gossip tells how he himself, sharing in the general mood of sullen resentment, took a walk along the winding lanes of the surrounding area and got what to him seemed nothing less than a look into the eyes of Christ. A boy was leading forth his sheep, going before them, the sheep following close behind. As he looked the whole scene changed in certain features of its character and context. In the place

of the sheep he saw himself and his men, and at their head he saw the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, and as distinctly as if he had heard a human voice the words were spoken into his ear: "And when He putteth forth His sheep He goeth before them."

"When He putteth forth His sheep *He* goeth before them." The realization of *that* is the thing; the thing that counts, the thing that makes the difference; the thing that "takes the grey out of the sky, the chill out of the heart, the weight off the work, the drag out of the feet." It changes the balance of the situation, gives victory to our tread, valour to our hearts, and puts us "on top." In that realization we breathe another air, we feel another wind. All kinds of new things are possible; new adventures, new fellowships, new hopes—"all things become new."

It is that fact which is the final explanation of all the holy exploits of the past; the explanation of "the breathless passion with which Paul pursued souls"; the explanation of the tireless energy with which for fifty years John Wesley offered Christ to the men of these three Kingdoms, and which led him to set his work in the larger relationship of all the seven seas; it is the explanation of how: "He that is feeble amongst us becomes as David, and the house of David becomes as God, and the Angel of the Lord before them." In the light of this fact circumstances set themselves into new lines, the outline of history takes on a new salient. We have never understood the real secret of things. Our Lord is forever "putting us forth" and also "going

before us." We have felt He was "putting us forth"—disturbing our peace, breaking into our complacence, spiting our ease. But the complementary fact we have never really "sensed."

The complementary truth gives us the real secret of *solvitur ambulando*. Those who "proceed" find the Real Presence. The adventurous are accompanied—even as Shackleton felt. Those who think away from themselves, ceasing to be the centre of their own world, find the pull of a new gravity. As self-forgetful they reach self-fulfilment; as sacrificial they taste the higher joy. All that we can gather as we look on the scene is the fact that this age suffers in the throes of unwelcome confusion and change. We get the situation on its shadow side. When we change our preposition (and George Fox's life is best interpreted, we are told, in terms of its "prepositions"), when, I say, we change our preposition and become part of the moving scene—one in it, one with it, the whole thing changes, we come upon its sunshine side. We are hardly conscious of the loss in the enrichment, we forget the surrenders in the enchantment. We carry music in our hearts as we let our Lord set the pace and beat the time. And all the while our enigmas are resolving themselves, our tangles unravelling, our vexing questions receiving their own final answer. We see that all the while, little as we knew it, we are "sojourners together with God." A deeper discovery of the truth awaits us as *solvitur ambulando* becomes the watchword of the Church and of our age.

## CHAPTER V.

### Evangelism viewed in its Background in Creative Experience, and in the Christian Community.

EVANGELISM rests upon Evangelical Experience and the Christian Community as its sustaining strength and as its driving force, just as the advancing wave rests back upon the bosom of the deep in order to fling itself forward in surging movement far along the circling beach.

So in order to get Evangelism in its true setting we must look for it in what lies back "in the redeemed consciousness, and in the Gospel fellowship." These condition each other, and interact; so they cannot be understood apart. They are aspects in the relationship the believing man shares with God in Christ. This Creative Life in the Church falls first to be considered.

#### 1. *Evangelical Experience the Creative Life of the Church.*

If we were asked to point out the true memorial

of Evangelical Christianity, we could do no better, and ought to do no less, than point to the Church of the Living God. The proposition we confidently put forward is that the distinctly original and creative thing in Christianity is Evangelical experience. We have no wish to insist that this experience is the only valid experience of God, but we do press the claim that it was Evangelical experience, and the celebration of it, which brought the Christian community into being, at the first. By that experience it has won its most enduring triumphs; by that experience it has fertilized human history and the moral life of the race; by that experience Christianity has discovered an unfailing source of renewal; by it alone can God be rapturously realized; and to this day, in that experience—as being both the true "continuum" and "constant" of the Church—we have our most confident hopes for the renewal of personal life, the remoulding of society, and the bringing in of the Kingdom of God.

Evangelical Experience has its memorials too in the race. It lives in the inspiration it has breathed into sacred causes and in the moral life and human sentiments it has created. What has been most lyrical in the story of man has been borne on this spirit as a song is borne on the breath. Its memorial would have been nobler had the conditions of its expression been more widely honoured. Sir Christopher Wren would have had a worthier memorial than St. Paul's had the co-ordination of the burgesses of London been forth-

coming in a united and disinterested service of the future. After the great fire of London, in the lofty imagination of his genius, he planned for a new City of wide transverse streets on a cruciform plan, with St. Paul's as the centre. But vested interests were involved, private rights were assailed in the scheme, so the glorious plan fell through—at what cost to facility of movement Londoners of to-day fully know.

And Evangelical Experience has the right, had it but the power, to universalize its life of charm throughout the race. Howbeit, the conditions of its operating life are so bound up in personal "consents," that its powers to mediate its blessings are abridged.

As a fact of history, men have made it the datum line of the highest postulates and the widest extensions. Paul's experience was the basis of all his "universals"—and one could fill this page with them. Augustine's experience of grace was his datum line in his plans for *The City of God*, which was to endure long after Rome's "decline and fall." Luther's experience of grace was the foundation on which he rested as he challenged the hierarchy of the Papal Court: "Here stand I . . ." It was "the ground wherein" John Wesley's soul found its stay as he "looked upon all the world as his parish."

Upon the basis of this experience, the most stupendous "extensions" have been made, reaching through all time and stretching through eternity. And, more marvellous still, these postulates of faith

have had their verifications, as no postulates ever made by men, have had.

When we compare the warrant Evangelicals possess to draw large inductions, those favoured by philosophers and even scientists pale into insignificance.

And these assurances of "ultimacy" are made where alone they can be made, within the range of the immediate life of the experiencing soul. The Fathers were profoundly right when they based their "certitudes" on what they felt God had done for their own soul—more right than they knew, more right too than their children realized. "The heart has reasons of its own" quite as valid as those which receive the approval of the logical mind. "What we have felt and seen" is not the poorest argument, but the best.

And it is on the basis of what is mediated to us through this experience of redeeming love that we proceed with our postulates, our practice and our preaching. We fertilize the intelligence with its seminal life; inspire conduct with its unconquerable hope and rapturous joy. Creative Experience gives to the message we deliver the mediation and facility it needs for its effectiveness, by the fresh wonder and amazement it awakens in our imagination, the new worth of character it produces, and the new width and wealth of the intelligence it calls forth. But what, for the moment, it concerns us to say is this: It changes our philosophical outlook from a pale and sallow hue to what is redemptively, romantically, and adventurously red. With this

experience as the dominant fact, thought "features" the "nature of things"—not with a faint and fugitive or neutral tint, but dyes every fact in the universe with its own rich hues. Since it is convinced of its touch, in this experience, with a true "universal," it refuses to believe there is any other species of wisdom which contravenes the wisdom of the Cross.

The astounding thing, always, about this experience, is that it makes necessary an adjustment of every other formulation. "All things become new" in their relationship one with another. An enriched and enlarged experience always leads to some modification of the formulations of the intellect. The case of Comte is well known. He had enclosed with precision and nicety his formulation of the universe on the basis of mental harmony and order, when his great experience of love for Clotilde was as a new birth to him. His older formulation in which love was "the serving maid to mind" proved useless. What had become a dominant to his experience must figure as paramount in his world view. So he reconstructed his system, reversing the part played by love, making thought to be its minister and servant; making affection, not rationality the motive power of social regeneration.

And always when "That one Face" comes into vision it "becomes one's universe that feels and knows." So we find men with a rich and deep evangelical content in their spiritual life making claims which sound foolish to those outside the

experience. It is so evidently a "dominant" that we find theologians and Christian philosophers declaring, "they have no use for a theology that doesn't evangelize," and "they have no service for a world view in which Christ is not supreme and central."

A Conquering Church holds the rod of God in its hand. By this "rod of God"—this "rood of the Cross"—the Church has ever triumphed. The fiery Cross flames its way through all the years. It is the one power through all the ages, we know, which has been able to "make change subserve its end," so proving itself a true "constant." It has won its claim to be called an "ultimate," surely, if the true test is that, "A thing is what it does." It has shown itself to be "the rod of God's strength" by "smiting" and cleaving "many a rock." The irresistible power accompanying it indicates just one thing, and that unmistakably, that it has "the nature of things" with it. Dr. Hutton has a memorable passage on the conquest made by the Early Church of the Roman Empire in which he names three general lines of influence which gave "victory to the tread" of the Gospel Community, and behind each there lies the rich evangelical experience of the Cross. The early Church conquered, "first by the force and attractiveness of her faith, second by the new and haunting quality of her goodness, and third by the sufferings which the world imposed, and which she bore, showing depth beneath depth of her communion with her Lord." By these three signs: faith,

goodness, suffering—she conquered. And how, may we ask, was faith inspired, but by apprehending God's action in the Incarnation and the Cross? And how was goodness of this new and haunting kind generated, but by the mystic experience of forgiveness through the Cross? How too was suffering—so ruthlessly imposed—borne but by "fellowship with His sufferings"? In a word, and greatly daring, may we not claim that all these graces which have made history "the procession of the Coronation of Christ" have been "conceived before the rood"—and bear in their texture and complexion and quality the marks of their distinctive origin.

Creative Experience represents, as I have suggested, "the ground plan of the universe" and the "norm" of goodness as also of history. Further, it enshrines within itself its own law and mediates in itself its own authority. Being the ultimate it is, it asks of us not to be supported, but to be manifested and mediated. It is declaratory of itself, containing its direction in its dynamic, conveying its own authentication in its own life "urge." When we live within its life, and act according to its genius, it needs no assertion from us of its claims. It is only in days of low visibility that we need to protest that "the sun is shining."

"Though dynamic it is not fluid"—as Dr. Stanley Jones has said—"There are fixed points." It has a "norm." We know in this fellowship what goodness is—it is "Christlikeness."

And that quality is the unique thing in the experience.

In its fellowship life "eternity takes the place of time in the heart," and the eternal is dynamic in the "relative." The love that is the creative life of this fellowship is a love that has a "norm" of its own. Prof. Baillie mentions three characteristics of it in his attempt to define "agapē." It is a Redeeming love, acting towards us in release. In order to be redemptive it is a sacrificing love; and by being a sacrificing and redemptive love it is a joyous and victorious love. Dr. Montefiore allows that in this Christian love there is a difference between it and "benevolent Jewish Righteousness." It is more venturous, self-sacrificing, eager, more giving, a virtue which does at its height cause a man "to lay down his life for his friend," a virtue that drives a man forth "to save, redeem, forgive."

### 2. *Creative Experience is the Safeguard of the Christian Gospel and of Religious Life.*

As this experience supplies the "norm" so also it supplies the test—and the safeguard of the Gospel and spiritual life. And it does so, not least, through its intensely sharpened antitheses. By these God holds us to Himself and to our destiny by both His hands. The antithesis is symbolized for us in the very form of the Cross with its trans-

verse beams. In the experience of forgiveness the sense is borne to us of crisis and of a crisis that has been faced, judgment being passed on sin, and love moving towards sinful men in reconciling power. In it are presented grace and truth as flowing from the fountain of Holy Love. Without grace truth would be ruthless rigour; without truth, grace would be mere sentimentality and amiability. In conscience one gets the intimation that God is "no neutral," in the experience of grace God moves towards us "taking sides" as against our sins, and as identifying Himself with us in sacrificing love for its overthrow, so clearing the way for the experience of fellowship. In this experience Christ stands both with God as "over against" man, and with man as "over against" God.

This experience pulses with the activity and initiative of God both in judgment and in grace, and that is the seminal thing in it.

It effects our release as we take in the overture and offer of its forgiveness and fellowship, and there pulses in our spirit the emotion of a great gratitude—in the life of which—we receive power "to become sons of God."

We are taken off "our dead centre," we think away from ourselves, by being enraptured out of our meaner life by the appeal of sacrificing love. The balance of the situation is altered. The experience of "being loved"—with a love like this—and loved despite our sin by one who bears it on His heart, enthrals us. This fact of a Redeeming Love gives value to all other facts;

this initiative of God gives impulse to all the holiest instincts of the soul; by this identification of God in Christ with us, the Personality of God—which ordinarily is but vaguely and dimly "sensed" and but half believed—becomes quickening and luminous, and in consequence our own personal life comes to possess a new intensity, distinctiveness and unity.

In a word then, which really sums up all the rest, this experience sounds out in its full compass and range the ultimate type of power, the supreme truth of the life of God, which is "Sacrificing, Redeeming Love."

We do well to suspect those statements of religious experience which lack "paradox." Religious experience is characterized by "equipoise" between two impetuous emotions, and the unity of the experience is not by their mixture or dilution, but is a unity in accentuated difference. Likeness and unlikeness, similarity and dissimilarity, kinship and "otherness" are represented there. Love and judgment in God are answered by a rapturous faith, by the compunctions of penitence in us. Suffering self-sacrificing love offering us forgiveness excites in us a nausea at sin. Its lure is broken by the greater awe and amazement of grace.

Now the safeguards this experience provides are very significant. It saves us from naturalizing tendencies in respect of Love and Fatherhood. Love is not obvious, as that grass is green. As Prof. H. R. Mackintosh puts it: "Except of Jesus, living and dying," such love had not "entered

the heart of man to conceive." Love is Redeeming Love, Pardoning Love, Holy Love. Dr. Moffatt affirms most strongly that "apart from the redeeming action of our Lord Jesus Christ, the early Church saw no ground whatever for believing in a God of Love." The New Testament has not in view love as a pervasive principle in the universe. It is not an intuition or obvious inference. It is only evident to those who see God acting in the person and mission of Jesus Christ.

The Cross, by the symbol of its material structure, means that the "vertical" must always be fixed in first, or the "horizontal," necessary to complete its form, loses its sure safeguard and support. The "Kinship" principle in the Cross is the true complement of its "otherness," but it is borne by, and alone rests safely upon, the primal truth of "difference," a difference never transcended, between "Creative Life" and the "Creature Life," between unsullied Holy love and sinning man.

Only as the two poles of the Cross are fully "alive," in God's unqualified judgment of sin and His infinite, sacrificing and redeeming love of sinners, will men feel the magnetism of the Cross; only so will Christ as "lifted up" draw all men unto Him.

There is correction here also, as I have already hinted, of the naturalizing tendencies in respect of the Fatherhood of God, as of the disposition represented in so many ways to-day of bringing God in upon the false basis of "parity." "Parity" always denotes that pride is creeping into faith.

As Dr. Dow has pointed out, there was always this tendency to be fought throughout the history of Israel. The implication was that if "Israel depended on Yahweh, Yahweh depended on Israel." Without worshippers the Deity had no status. His own honour was bound up with the preservation of His people; so the chosen race saw itself sacrosanct, indispensable. Yahweh was bound to Israel's chariot, and so, the charioteer challenged the universe with a "blind, unreasoning presumption." And, save as a rich evangelical experience gives emphasis to the antinomy of Creaturehood and Creatorship in the "otherness" of God, the tendency will always be to make God dependent on the universe, even as the universe is dependent upon Him. It is an induction which is easily drawn by the "unevangelized" mind. We cannot too strongly impress upon ourselves in these days that Jesus is the only way to "The Father," since by any other approach we never get beyond the "projections" of our own imagination, and fail completely to escape "the sound of our own voices." The new Psychology may have occasioned us some embarrassment and created for us a new task in the realm of apologetic by challenging the objective character of our religious experience; but it has also hit upon the fatal weakness of an unevangelized religion. Except we see God as coming unmistakably to us in the initiative of the Incarnation and the Cross, and in the correlatives of these facts in the experience of His Grace, we are shut up, as it seems to me, to something like a self-enclosure in which "projection"

is actually the almost invariable tendency of the mind.

We are "saved"—so speaks "the Word of the Cross"—not by what may be termed "the general benevolence of God," but by faith in the great Redemptive act by which God takes upon Himself the weight of the whole human situation and the woe of human sin, mediating to us through Grace "the power to become Sons" and to live the life of filial fellowship. Only in such a context do we get, or can we safeguard, the truth of the "Fatherhood of God." Only as we come to know God on the plane of His august holiness have we the real experience of His Fatherhood. In a word—to quote Dr. Scott Lidgett—"Only as conditioned in the evangelical experience can the Fatherhood become the first and last word of Christianity."

The Creative experience also secures us against an inert forgiveness.

An organism is always furnished with its true protection, as well as its operating law, within its own life. Its true shield is in itself. It is not "preserved" finally by anything introduced from without. This could be extensively illustrated by reference to the wonderful power of balance preserved in the physical organism by its "interacting forces." Infant life, for example, is secured against inertness by the life force which demands the exercises of the muscles. In the great experience of forgiveness mediated through the Cross the great life energy of God is discovered in its passion for fellowship and service.

The Cross shows forgiveness to be necessary. It has a strange power of making the conscience sensitive to sin. It shows forgiveness to be credible —which is by no means an obvious thing when once the conscience is thoroughly awake—as all great literature shows. It also saves forgiveness from being inert by making it, not a mere condonation of offence, a "calling off" of sin, but a means to the restoration of a fellowship in which the life of true sonship comes to full realization. God does not forgive in the spirit of "There, never let me see your face again," but in the passion of the Father in the parable: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." Forgiveness, in a word, "is offered in the interests of life."

The "personal" character of the overture and fellowship of the Cross also secures the truly personal character of faith. Faith always tends to be subpersonal when truth is presented "propositionally." A "scheme" makes ready appeal to the formulating mind. A "plan" invites the interest of the intelligence, but may not rally the heart. When dogma is presented the first demand seems to be for conformity. When forgiveness is viewed out of relationship to fellowship faith takes on too completely the character of a "cover." When the Cross is figured as an "apparatus," faith becomes mechanistic. But Creative Experience exhibits faith in its truly personal and dynamic form. In this Creative Experience personal relationships are restored, and the response of faith cannot, without violation of the law of its life, be less than fully

personal. We do not meet—in this fellowship at points—but in all the width and range of our being, and as "wholes." Creative Experience gives to faith flexibility and adaptiveness, making it subserve the ends of life.

Again, it has been noted that Grace, as often presented in the Christian Salvation, though so sovereign a word, tends to become depersonalized, and must recover its intensely personal character by being mated with the truth of fellowship. Whatever obscures the distinctly personal relationships of the Cross dims its true glory. By the action of our too "literalizing" minds the images we use become projected upon the reality we describe.

For the same reason, a term so hallowed to Christian usage and so bound up with what is central in Christian experience as "the blood of Christ," needs to be used with reverent and discriminating care. For those "initiated" into its secret heart, who live in the atmosphere and life of the New Testament, the word draws with it a whole train of sacred associations. But as a word to use freely amongst ourselves, or indiscriminately amongst outsiders, as best fitted to bring home the truth of the Christian Salvation to those not steeped in New Testament thought, it is entirely inadequate and may, unless carefully guarded, become positively injurious to the truth.

It would, however, be a serious impoverishment to religious worship to omit altogether the great hymns of Christian experience which are couched, mainly, in the great words of New Testament

faith just because of a few lines which, by their images, offend our taste. In a "Fellowship Group" in which I meet, this matter was discussed. One member of the circle spoke of the thrill with which he had sung the previous Sunday evening the lines :

> My God, I am thine;
> What a comfort divine.

However he had received a letter from one of his young people during the week in which the opinion was expressed that verses like :

> My Jesus to know,
> And to feel His blood flow,

somehow came in as a "jarring note" and as a discord to his mind, as being crude and not the fitting way of expressing a really great truth.

The general feeling of the "Group" was, that whilst a greater sense of Redemptive Reality would make people less fastidious in respect of particular "phrases," yet in order effectively to present the truth of the Cross we are not called upon to stress "images" of this particular kind. Still it was felt generally that in some of our hymns—not indeed the greatest—we had gone considerably beyond the more chastened expressions of the truth given in the New Testament.

Again, a peril never far away from even the crowning experiences of religion is that they should "revert to form," and become as "a fading flower." The great doctrine of Assurance may do so, among the rest, except as it is constantly sustained in the

Creative Life. Dr. Denney "affirms that" nothing is more characteristic of Churches than the place they give to "Assurance" in their preaching and doctrine. "In the Roman Church it is regarded as akin to presumption. In Protestantism it is a privilege and a duty. In the New Testament it is simply a fact." In Romanism, with every new mortal sin a man forfeits his standing in grace, and this begets a mood of painful suspense. In the Creative Experience, Assurance is a joyous consciousness of restored relationship not "alongside" but as an integral part of it.

But when men come to rest coldly in any propositional form which is supposed to register Assurance, the soul is brought to a "dead centre." The same peril attaches to all views of the relationship-life of grace which are represented in scheduled stages as say, "blessings" to which a numerical symbol is attached. Such tend to mechanize and stereotype into "forms" what should be kept free in the interactions of life. It is undoubtedly true that there are stages of advance in the Creative life of the soul, but these cannot be rigidly scheduled without grave danger. They tend to introduce the element of form where it becomes an anomaly, and they also tend to divide the true followers of Christ off from one another as the "partly initiated" and "fully initiated" in quite artificial ways. Now there are notable stages of development in a fellowship, but you cannot rightly number them or separate them. There is no doubt that frequently the "forgiveness" experience is separated in time

from the full consecration experience. For a man under conviction of sin can only see one thing in the Cross and that is "mercy," and it is only later, may be, that he comes to a realization of the call the Cross makes for a fuller identification with its "death-to-sin, and life-in-God relationship."

But the approaches to the experience of "fellowship in the Spirit" are as varied as is human personality, and artificiality tends to ensue and fine human qualities to be overlaid, when the experience of a section is set up as the true "norm" for the rest.

"Keeping the unity of the Spirit" depends not only upon our maintaining the full Creative Life, but on our refusal to admit into its organism all that artificially separates.

Again, there is always in "the natural man" an unfriendliness to the exacting demands of Christ, and often in the mood of evasion, he sets the "religion of the spirit" over against the "religion of authority," as if it were a less exacting thing. Of course, mistakenly so. "The religious difficulty"—as Denney says—is "the difficulty of being religious."

Now the religion of rule is always false because it encourages the spirit of self-sufficiency and the mood of complaisance. And the absurdest thing in the world is to trust to that bundle of disorganized and unharmonized instincts we call "the self."

Some people set themselves "like grim death" to do certain religious acts. It is a strain they cannot stand. There is a reaction. Often it is

imagined that to substitute the "religion of the spirit" for that of "rule" would mean a milder and cheaper faith. But it is not so. The spirit has far more challenging demands to make than is possible to "rule and law." It is committed to going "all lengths." The "religion of the Spirit" never "lets a man off." But how can this sense of the greater demand "of the religion of the spirit" be fostered save through a vital relationship with Christ?

To be "in Christ" is not to be disobedient to law but disburdened of it. There is a true authority integral to the Creative experience, which sounds its "summons" in the soul. But, just because it answers to "the power of God" in suffering, self-sacrificing love, it has its authority in the inspiration it creates, and so does not lie heavily upon the soul.

We claim then that Evangelical Experience, as a fellowship with Christ in His living and in His dying, is the truly creative and regulative principle of the Christian Church, even as it is also the true strength and sure safeguard of the Christian Gospel.

Therein lies its "genius," the law of its life, its true authority, the secret of its purity, and the power of its effective witness. If the experience fails, its formulation in doctrine can never renew it. Doctrine has a real service to render as a testimony to the great discoveries made in "fellowship life." It points to the door by which this fellowship has been made available for us, and is a valuable registration of what the ages of Christian

faith have found this life to be in all its rich unity and difference.

It must ever be that a great reality of consciousness, finely toned in the emotions of the soul, as this experience is, will demand expression, and be enriched by expression, in the conceptual forms of doctrine. If, however, the noetic or intellectual quality had been primary in the Church and Gospel, doctrine would have been its true "constant." But the noetic is not its primal quality, the dynamic is, and it is to the dynamic life that we must look for the Church's "community," and the Gospel's continuity and effectiveness.

We are far wiser to seek to keep evangelical experience vital than to put forth strenuous energy to keep its standards fixed. "The faith, once for all delivered to the saints," is in the realm of the dynamic and experimental, and not primarily in the realm of the noetic and doctrinal.

### 3. *Creative Experience is the Life Pulse and Passion of Evangelism.*

Just as really as Creative Experience contains within its life its own law and protection, so surely does it contain the passion to propagate itself. In other words, Creative Experience is the life-pulse and passion of evangelism. Its life is seminal and reproductive. And, as such, Evangelism partakes of the character of its source. In its adventurous impulse—always going beyond itself with

an unexpectedness which takes away the breath—it carries the pulse in it of the plunge of the life of God in the Incarnation, and in the even deeper plunge of the Cross.

Its very nature is to outpour itself and overflow in an initiative and imperative that scorns to "play for safety," loves the zest of hazard, despises small prudences, and in sheer exultancy is concerned, not with preserving its existence, but with propagating its life. Since it rests on redemptive action its passion is both activating and redemptive. It throbs with the passion of "A God who gives His life for all." Its pulse is impatient of "inconclusive vapourings of mind." It possesses a rigour like that hinted at in Shakespeare's lines: "Thoughts are but dreams, till their effects be tried." We get, not the listless pulsings of some inland sea, but the strong vigorous pulse of a great ocean, whose expansive bosom heaves with the pull of nothing less than the whole "nature of things." Seeing too that its pulse is always being quickened in the tidal life of which it is the recipient, its passion is to identify itself with others, to strain at the barriers which separate personalities one from another and to share its life with theirs. As God Himself could not rest outside the life of His children, but must come in His Son within our humanity, and through His Spirit into our hearts, so this passion must incorporate itself since it shares the pulse of the social life of God.

It is an urgent pulse and reflects the crisis out of which its great experience was begotten—"the

place where two seas meet." It contains the sense, so bound up in the life and truth of Christianity and so lacking in other faiths, that God's life in relation to man is conditioned and developed not primarily in the disclosure of ideas, but in the process and crisis of action. This sense of " real " crisis in the time process is not favoured, of course, in speculative thought, and one of its most serious deficiencies as a guide to life is just this lack of " the time sense " as crucial. Perhaps, when Religious Experience becomes more creative and the true significance for thought of the Christian facts is more adequately realized, we shall have a developed Christian philosophy which does greater justice to the historical process by which God has developed His relationships with man. At the present History is the Cinderella of Philosophy.

But to stress our particular point—Evangelical passion pulses with a sense of " crisis " in the time process at its heart, which pure thought eludes. It is an echo of something which distinctly characterised our Lord's life among men, which we tend to lose from our thought to-day. The sense that life has its critical phases and issues was never absent from His mind. Jesus was expansive in His delight in nature and genial in His sympathy with men, but a "poignancy" underlies it all which is always making itself evident in the sharp issues which He raised, and in the sense He ever conveyed of life as always facing and ever moving towards a throne of judgment.

This sense of " crisis " and urgency is begotten

through a deep experience of fellowship with Christ in His Cross, and that is why the merely "declaratory" view of the Cross in which the active travail of God and His work in Redemption is "the missing dimension," proves to be so ineffective as an evangelizing medium; ineffective, as I believe, because it fails to "connect" with the deepest beat in the heart of Redemptive Reality. Perhaps I may be permitted to dwell on this point a moment longer, as it is so vital that we should get this sharp and strong pulse in Evangelical passion. An illustration will help us.

Sir James Mackenzie, "the beloved physician" and heart specialist, invented, it will be remembered, a special instrument called "the Polygraph" for tracing out the pulsings of the heart. By a clock-work mechanism which marks a long roll of smooth paper with red ink, it registers the beatings of the heart—the pens carrying with them their own ink. The tracings of the pulse of vigorous hearts is like the great roll of Atlantic breakers. With a nervous heart the tracings are as irregular as the temperature chart of a fevered patient. In other cases gaps occur in the markings which indicate "missed beats." All of which has a moral of its own, which I do not at the moment draw, in respect of the pulsings of evangelical passion in our hearts.

A very remarkable discovery of Sir James was that the final test of heart vigour was not in its "murmurs" nor yet in its rhythm, not even in its pulsings in the veins of the neck, but in its response to effort—a kind of physical analogy of

the truth that "a thing is what it does." But that is not the point I wish to stress at the moment. His greatest achievement was his finding that the heart may go on beating when the upper chambers are not getting the pulse—and he was able to get a record of this through his instrument. At another point in the study of our theme I should like to draw the moral that not infrequently the upper chambers of the evangelical heart in a spiritualized intelligence fail to get the beat; but here and now I want to let it serve us to stress the fact that though we get the beat of real Christian truth in the "declaratory" view—and are carrying on the business of living or at least of existence—yet we are not registering in our feeble pulsings of passion this "urgency" in all the chambers of our heart.

We are suffering from anæmia, as our revered and beloved Dr. Peake insisted; far more from thinness of blood than from obscurantism. I don't know whether "low blood pressure" is a contributory cause in an anæmic condition, but I imagine it would be. I feel much more certain about this, that if there was a strong muscular action of a healthy evangelical heart in a more decisive pulse of urgency, the general situation of our devitalized Christian life would soon show signs of marked improvement.

Having ceased from being the centre of its own world the Christian heart, in fellowship with Christ, develops a new sympathetic sensibility which cannot rest outside the sorrows of others, but must feel itself into the lot and loss of other hearts and echo

them in the pain of its own. It represents a true universalizing of the "ultimate," not in terms of thought merely, but of feeling baptism into all men's conditions—"Jesus, Thou art all compassion" is what we feel about our Lord Himself, and that pulse of Christ's own heart is echoed in our own. Our Lord's own spirit was an "Anathoth"—the home of echoes. His spirit was constantly answering to the deeps which were sounding in other hearts. He could not keep outside men's sorrows. He "bore" their sicknesses and griefs.

His was not the easy profusion of wealth in costless doles amongst men. He insinuated Himself so into the condition of others' hearts that He felt their poverty when He gave His wealth; He experienced in the fine sensibilities of His soul the disease that He cured. That is what is signified, surely, in the word, "He bare our sicknesses." He bore all He lifted. He made no escape into some upper world when He came upon suffering and sin, but feeling into the most intimate heart of the sin and the suffering first, He then mediated to it, in the solace and pity of His spirit, the grace of the Eternal Father.

We want to help men, but we want to do it at a distance and through some secondary agency by gifts apart from ourselves. But compassion should be Christianized and humanized to the last degree. It feels as it bestows, it bleeds as it blesses, it suffers the sorrows it solaces; it is never content to rest outside the most intimate of personal contacts.

The most distinctive thing in Evangelical passion

is poignancy as distinct from sympathy. The pains at the heart of this passion "senses" in its compunctions the anguish of God in the presence of sin.

Sympathy is a sweetly human grace of fellow-feeling, poignancy is that grace evangelized in such a way that it bears a certain "torture" in the depths of its tenderness. It is instinct with not only the rapture, but also the tragedy of the Cross. So it comes to be that "things get one" differently, because the reaction is not only to the human situation, but to a situation which has its setting in God's redemptive heart. There is borne in this passion not only the tremor begotten of the feeling that "we fear to forfeit the favour of so great a Heart," but also the sense that we cannot bear to be out of fellowship with a sorrow so deep. There is a description given in the thrilling biography of Temple Gairdner of Cairo, of Gairdner and Robert Steward (soon to meet his martyrdom in China) on Derwentwater, and of Steward—a tall, bareheaded figure—calling across as they parted company with each other: "Remember, 'Agonia' is the measure of success"—and this, with outstretched hands and shining face. How strange a spectacle and paradox—to speak of "agonia" with a shining face. And yet, it would seem as if the qualitative difference of all the emotions of the soul are charged through the fellowship life of the Cross. Fellowship in the sacrificial life of Jesus opens for us a qualitatively different joy from that which usually goes by that name. It senses in

the contrasts of the two worlds it teaches the deep differences of things, and deeper depths of feeling are involved in the process. It is out of those depths from which the great redeeming passion springs. And so you get the tremor and the sweat exhibited in David Brainerd's *Journal.* You get the poignant grief of William Carey, quivering in sensitiveness of pain as he has to write "pagan" ninety-nine times over thickly populated regions on his map of the world.

It is not that such hearts do not feel the delights of nature and of sweet human sympathy. To take Carey as an instance: he felt "the natural world and he were as brother and sister," and he was a true brother of men. But in and through these emotions—not alongside, as if some marginal note has inadvertently slipped into the text—there flows the surge of the sorrows of God, and "the desperate tides of a whole world's anguish sweep through the channels of a single heart." Surely if anything in human experience can claim the terms of "ultimate" and "universal," such a "poignancy" in the heart of man can do it.

In lieu, however, of that deeper evangelized life of contrasted and intensified emotions, many make choice of one or other of the less intense and uncontrasted types. The God they conceive is—even as Aristotle conceived Him—One whose supreme occupation is intellectual contemplation, and their minds rather than their hearts make faint vibrations to His thought as such. Or, the God they conceive is One whose Fatherhood has been erased from the

background in which it is set in the New Testament. They view Him as hardly needing to disturb His eternal repose in order to overthrow sin, which has never appeared to them as tragic.

Whilst the love He shows us in "calling us sons" is more a love to be intuitionally appreciated than as the gift out of the heart of a great sacrifice.

Had the passion which would have developed from such a conception been the only driving force of the Evangelists of the Early Church, would they have won the Empire for Christ? We feel sure they would not.

And shall we produce conviction of eternal truth unless we mediate the truly distinctive and evangelical "passion"? We feel sure we shall not.

Evangelism is always "a careering thing" because always under the impact of the urgency which ever abides in ultimate things. It is a living movement of the spirit. Reality at its heart "is alive," and "a live thing" stirs in its pulse. "You can't get a symbol for it out of upholstery. It is not a thing of curtained privacy, or cushioned ease." Small comforts and easy satisfactions are foreign to it. It is too big a thing to thrive in a small way. To "hold it up" would be to certify its death. It lives on unbounded aims, and limitless opportunities. It needs all races for its range, all ages for its operations, and all hearts for its treasure. It pulses with "good news" that "can't be kept," that "must be told."

I once heard Norman Maclean of Edinburgh

preach on "How beautiful are the feet . . ." in which he remarked how seldom beauty is associated with the lower limbs, "but good news" gives to the speeding feet an agility and elasticity which makes them fittingly named "beautiful." The first thing, too, that gives us our clue when we are waiting for news, in some suspense, is just the "running" feet and the expression of the rapture, or the tragedy, the feet in their movements represent. So it was that David, anxiously waiting for "news" of the battle in which his troops were engaged with Absalom's, was able to draw inferences of the good tidings or sad tidings the messengers brought, by the manner of their "running."

The obvious moral is that only as Evangelism is a "careering thing" is it true to its genius. It seems a contradiction in terms to go on the mission of telling "good news which take the sting out of all bad news," to the movement of feet like those of the schoolboy going "unwillingly to school."

By contrast the quick rhythm of speeding feet bearing a message of rapturous import always seem to sound in Trench's lines:

> I say to thee do thou repeat
> To the first man thou mayest meet
> In highway, lane, or busy street
>
> That he and we, and all men move
> Under a canopy of love
> Broader than the blue sky above.

Of Horatio Nelson, Trevelyan, in his *History of England*, remarks: "He was always in his element and always on it," and an Adventurous Church

likewise, lives in and lives on its careering spirit of evangelism.

The passion that makes Evangelism the careering thing it is, is of course the passion of love.

> The Love of Christ doth me constrain
> To seek the wandering souls of men.

It is strange how complex and yet how unified the emotional life is. A doom seems to sound in a love that remains untold. "Woe is me," says the Apostle, "if I preach not the Gospel." Love, whilst it is essentially an expansive emotion, has its own way of laying constraint upon the soul. Whilst it enraptures it also enthralls and commissions, and lays its commissions in such an urgent way as always to contain implicitly the suggestion that doom rests upon trifling with or thwarting its impulse.

This constraint comes to us through no inference that we draw, it is part of the life urge of the Cross. Our Redeeming God depends on this instinct and constraint in redeemed hearts to propagate His reconciling purpose, and so it possesses this dynamic quality in our hearts.

With that contractive element of constraint there is associated the expansive element of compassion. If the impetuousness of this passion may be represented as "speeding feet," the compassion of it may be represented as by "open arms"—as, e.g., in the prophet's picture: "I will save you with a stretched-out arm"; or "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." Compassion is an

enfolding love. Its beauty is not like that of the statue of Venus in the Louvre before which Heine lay, uttering the plaint: "She is lovely but she has no arms."

Its enfolding arms represent, however, no ignoring or condoning of sin. Mediated—though not voiced—through compassion, is the doom that sounds upon sin. Outside evangelical experience we often find compassion without condemnation, and condemnation without compassion, but here we get the deepest soundings of both, though compassion is always explicit and doom sounds implicitly. The judgment that sounds in an evangelized compassion is nothing less than the doom a man has heard sounded in his own experience of the Cross.

This is a procreative passion. The experience begotten tends to beget its like in others. One loving heart sets another on fire. The sense of forgiveness is a "live thing." The instinctive action of a soul finding forgiveness is to spread the news of it.

This creative passion of Evangelism is the dominant impulse of the redeemed heart. Our Lord makes it the great highway along which His Spirit moves, and the Church only feels her Lord near to her and throbbing imperiously and yearningly in her heart, when she answers this travail of her Redeemer with the travail of her own.

We have missed our Lord's fellowship because we have not been willing to share this passion of His heart. When we begin to take "His way" we shall find Him again. In an adventurous evangelism—a crusade which is always on and

which lasts a lifetime—He will discover to us His adventurous self, and an exhilaration will come to the Church's life which will bear a true proportion to the abandonment and ardour of the spirit we bring.

Meanwhile, what our Lord must be feeling seems to me symbolized by what is told us of William Carey after he had preached his challenging sermon at Nottingham on: "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God."

Having felt "the tides of a great anguish" through his own soul he expected his brethren to be of similar mind with himself regarding the urgency of the task. But they were not; the old hesitations and doubts returned, and next morning they were about to defer the whole enterprise once more when Carey, turning to that square-built, athletic, and whole-hearted man, Andrew Fuller, and grasping him by the arm, cried: "And is there nothing going to be done, sir?"

It was a breathless moment in the history of the Kingdom of God. Fuller trembled for a moment beneath that importunate grip and, at the sound of that heart-piercing cry, and then with the breath of the Spirit on his heart he said "yes," and so became the other foot of the great adventurous movement for the evangelization of India.

And, once again, we may ask, is there nothing going to be done?

## CHAPTER VI.

### Evangelism.

### 1. *Minding its Context.*

EVANGELICAL Experience has a law and life and authority of its own, but it does not live in a world of its own. It must mind its contexts. It must not cut itself off from any part of God's world. All truth finds its equipoise by being set in the whole of its relationships. Whenever anything in its life-relationship is wilfully ignored it begins to show a "list" and it loses its balance. We cannot keep God in our soul and leave Him out of His world. To be "alive unto God" means that we shall be alive to His operations in our soul and in all that is.

Our religious life must be lived, and our evangelical task carried out in view of the full circle of truth. It is our living in a partially enclosed world that begets the doctrinaire, the bigot and the alarmist.

Even the "princes" of the evangelical life may fall victims by reason of their failure to "mind their contexts," to the distortions of prejudice and so to some extent impair their witness. It seems churlish to cite as an illustration a man whose shoe latchet we are not worthy to stoop down and unloose—Lord Shaftesbury. And yet with all his warm humanitarian and evangelical ardour he saw "a subtle degeneration besetting religion" when the Revised Translation of 1881 was proposed.

Not a few of our difficulties to-day are due to our having to make retreat from positions once occupied by reason of their having been found untenable. Our "Liege" proved vulnerable, and our "Mauberge," and in retiring from positions which are assailed we find ourselves fighting under the most difficult of all conditions—engaging the enemy whilst in retirement from what has been found to be impossible ground. God, who knows the strain and tension to which our "souls have been put," must be looking very tenderly towards His Church during these days.

We are shortening our line—that is a great mercy—and the retreat has never become a rout, thanks to faithful souls, and men of spiritual insight and sound scholarship, who have conducted the necessary retreat. We have just about reached our "Marne." We see our Christian faith as dynamic, and as essentially a life, and a life of restored personal relationships, we see this restored life as a life with Christ in God, through the Cross. We can deliver a counter-attack from that line, as

we can do from no other. We are listening out for the breath of the Spirit, through some Foch who will call for an adventurous, concerted counter-stroke. Troops, more heartless than beaten, more confused than cowardly, will find rejuvenation as they "turn about face"; and, best of all, will find that in their adventure they are accompanied by One whose true name is not "Our Ally," but "The Captain of the Lord's Hosts."

And my point at this moment, of course, is this, that had "the Life in Christ" been discerned clearly for what it was, and set in its true context with life, our present dilemma would not have been presented to us in so sharp and crippling a form. And our want of spiritual discrimination of the issues to-day may, in some way, embarrass our children.

The context to be minded is that represented in the historic and superhistoric side of our faith. "If we cut the historical from experience there will soon be no experience left." "But whilst we have the Christ of history, one must know Him, too, as the Great Contemporary," to phrase the truth in Dr. Stanley Jones' words.

The historical and spiritual go in and through each other. They are interacting parts of the one whole. They are counterparts. We must set our evangelism in the context of great objective facts, for we are not promulgating an idea, but conveying a romantic fact after God. He has not built a pier out towards us—one can never go far on a pier. He has made a bridge which reaches over to our

side, and He "stands with us" in the mystery and marvel of Grace, and "offers Himself to us." We have not to "pull down the branch" on which the truth of forgiveness and fellowship are found. If we had to leap upwards to bring it down it might spring skywards again. No, it lies at our side, love-laden by its load of benefits, to be had for our reverent taking.

But our faith is not only historic but superhistoric. Its context is not only the Christ of the hills of Galilee, or of the Cross upon the green hill far away, there is the context of Christ within the redeemed consciousness, dwelling in our hearts by faith. We taste the powers of the world to come of which we speak. We land upon the spiritual world and breathe its air, here and now, in our fellowship with Christ. The nearest context of the Gospel is not in the black and white of the printed text but in the red of the evangelized heart.

The ministry of evangelism must have those historic and superhistoric facts as its first terms of reference. Both are needed. Our Authority is the Living Lord; we cannot stereotype our Authority without grave peril. There is a real movement of the Spirit in the circling years. Dr. Swete, too, has warned us that the essential nature of Christianity cannot be realized simply by going back to the past. We need the past, for it is a living past with the presence and providence of God in it. As Dr. Denney used to say: "If we take out of what is, what was, what's left?" But

not the past alone ; the living present is needed, the new word of Christ in the Christian consciousness, and the Christian Community of to-day. Our function can only be fulfilled through a living fellowship and an ever coming Lord.

We shall also require, to fulfil "this ministry," to keep ourselves in touch with our constituency. We are to do justice to our object as well as our subject. We are to discover "the ignition point" in the human heart. We are to be adepts at discovering "new contacts" and new "tackling points" in respect of the human personalities whom we are seeking to win. Something will be said of this in a later chapter.

We need also to keep relationship with the thought and thought-forms of our age if we are to keep our ministry relevant to the real situation in which it is set. The truth we proclaim must "speak home" to "men's business and bosoms."

We must get alongside. To win a heart we must unveil a heart. We cannot do it if we dwell in a world apart. We must keep the common touch. A context we cannot afford to neglect is the need and ache of human hearts.

Ruskin describes a painting by Giotto which represents a female figure trampling on bags of gold and holding up the flowers and fruits of earth to heaven, whilst God's hand is extended, offering to her "the gift of a heart."

For evangelism the prayer: "Give me a heart like Thine," sums up our need better than any other petition. Of this more will be said later.

### 2. *Maintaining the Correlatives.*

The greatest need—it can never be too strongly insisted—is to make Christ our life's true dominant ; and then proceed to correlate all the manifold relationships in which we stand to ourselves and to others in an honouring allegiance to the play of His Life and Light and Love upon us.

Dr. Rendel Harris has a word well worth pondering. Asking the question of Charles Wesley's hymn : " When shall I find my willing heart all taken up by Thee ? " he answers : " When it becomes a willing heart."

The co-ordination of our powers in childhood is not accomplished " at a stroke." It is little by little that we learn to see things in true perspective ; little by little that we learn to walk. And having learnt these lessons well, as Sir William Osler used to tell his students, we have to add to our five senses two senses more, " the sense of responsibility and the sense of proportion."

As we proceed with the task of organizing or, better still, integrating our evangelical experience, we do well to suspect things that lie " in uneasy combination." (That is not, by the way, the fact in the paradox of evangelical experience itself. The paradox there is accentuated ; it belongs to the very nature of the situation.) We are to get " mind and soul according well." For Christ brings Life to the whole of life, and Christ as Light brings truth to the whole of thought. " In His Light we see light." The Life and Light in Christ

are to be interpreted and integrated in the whole of our thought and outlook. They are to interpenetrate and tone the whole.

The mind and outlook of Jesus was always steeped in the tonal qualities of the life of fellowship with the Father.

This attunement throughout the whole range of life's thought and outlook, is the counterpart of "Atonement" in the great work of Christ. "The passion common to both is to reconcile."

I think the idea George Macdonald worked out so often is essentially true. He "viewed the whole of natural human graces as the subjects of evangelizing operation," and he would speak of "Kingdom kindness" and "Kingdom patience."

We are to co-ordinate, as Peter suggests, all graces until they wear the charm of this grace. "Add to your faith . . . virtue . . . . ." It is never honouring to faith to keep it on a short chain. Dr. Meyer used to tell how revolutionary was the influence upon him of the words: "We shall be saved by His life." Reconciled by His death indeed but saved by His life; not by formulations of doctrine, nor by any system of truth, but saved by the opening of every avenue of mind and heart to "His Life." Our natural graces are saved—even as we are saved from our vices.

Our thought-life also must be correlated with our experience; and our experience must be maintained in interaction with our mind. We are to be ever representing in symbols of the mind the truths begotten of experience. Only so does truth

become " real estate " to us. We lose truth if we keep it self-enclosed. It is always disclosing unsuspected values when we keep it in circulation.

Luther Burbank, the famous horticulturalist, says : "A new setting in a fresh environment will often bring to light in a plant a dormant possibility. The Japanese blood-red plum, e.g., showed new features in Californian soil, features which it had never been suspected of possessing in Japan."

We need in these complex days, very greatly, a finer order of spiritualized intelligence. " Our rational processes must be steeped through and through with the spiritual virtue of our faith." Thought is sterilized save as that virtue works in it—sterilized at any rate for the purposes of the Kingdom.

We cannot afford to let our previous formulations put blinkers on our eyes. " We must note markedly the connections of things usually unrelated and distinguish between things usually confused."

Some attempt to keep their faith by turning their backs on half the facts of life. But " facts " in any realm are God's facts, and they have their own message to deliver—we must see that we refuse not Him that speaketh " through the world of facts." " By every word of God doth man live."

Our experience of fellowship gives us an " all-in vision." Facts do not represent truth till we see them in right relationship and focus. The " ultimate " in our experience gives us the true standpoint. How much surer a basis it is than

that on which J. M. Robertson rests. "Truth (for him) is something ideated as a result of the reasoning processes." A man becomes under such a sense of things "his own victim."

Truth is "in relationship." No idea, or set of ideas, can be held in isolation. "We cannot deal with one fact without coming in sight of all."

The "splendid isolation" idea is death. The Gospel becomes "my Gospel" as it goes through one's thinking and living. Bishop Gore reminds us that "we must not forget the responsibilities of thought in the opportunities of service."

The interactions are of various kinds. There is a variation of "stress," as thought relates itself to thought. There is the changing of places between the background and foreground; the implicit becomes explicit; the latent, patent; the romantic comes to its period of precision, and the precise returns to the realm of romance. Formulation returns to fact, and fact finds itself anew in formulation. The particular ascends to the principle, and the principle descends to the particular—like so many angels on a Jacob's ladder. And so the process of fertilization goes on, the interaction being the very pulse of the operating mind. Then there is the correlation with social life.

Dora Greenwell always stresses the fact that "mere spirituality seems to exhaust the soil that rears it." It needs the touch of common life to give it vigour. It needs science to save it from superstition, literature to refine its forms of extension, but most of all it needs raw human

contacts. She represents Philip reading Keats on a delightful summer's evening amid the scents of the garden, when he is sent by his conscience to visit some poor folks in the stuffy cottages near by. "My heart," he said, "was with Endymion, and I had to tell the story of Christ." It is at the peril of our higher nature that we avert our gaze from common human life.

Nature and Grace are not contradictory. The awe and amazement which fills the heart in evangelical experience will help us to see far more in human nature than before, and in return, will fertilize the life of the spirit.

In quaint old George Herbert's Rectory garden at Little Bemerton, near Salisbury, there is a mulberry tree which the poet's own hands planted. Within recent years it has lain almost prone and has looked well-nigh dead till lately. But now hawthorn saplings have been carefully planted alongside, and skilled hands have grafted it into the ancient stocks. And lo, through the new force imparted, strong branches are now bursting forth, bearing rich mulberry leafage, and giving fine promise of fruit-yielding glory in the not-far-off days.

And the fruit-bearing trees of our Church gardens languish and decline, except as they are crossed with the roadside wilder growths of common human life. Rectory fruit trees and wayside hawthorns fit well together; they cannot well fructify apart. Nor is there any fear of the evangelical fruit tree running merely to flower if the graft is carried out

by expert hands and well-experienced souls, for the evangelical is the truly dominating life.

How narrow the merely religious world may become! If, as it is said, the West end of the city needs the East as much as the East needs the West, so Grace needs nature even as nature needs Grace.

St. Teresa, in one of her naive comments, says, speaking of a great Saint of her day: "With all his sanctity, he was kind." There is a good deal of sound philosophy in the little girl's prayer: "Lord, make the bad people good, the good people nice." For many of the bad people would be good if the good people who are not nice didn't "put them off."

A very fitting prayer for spiritual people might be: "Let me live in a house by the side of the road and be a friend to man."

As Stanley Jones says: "We must respond to all the meanings we find in Christ." This will save us from the "professional air," and from that death-in-life condition in which we have ceased to grow, but simply live on the diminishing virtues of older days, "our character all in the past."

An opportunity will present itself later of dealing with the actualizing and moralizing correlations which are called for from a truly evangelical heart.

I am reminded, however, before passing on, of the enquiry of a stranger at a Quakers' meeting: "When will the service begin?" And the pertinent reply: "When thou, friend, dost begin to serve." The actuating Grace of the evangelized experience is greatly needed.

### 3 *The Ministry of Mediation.*

Evangelism comes to its fine point in the way in which it essays to communicate itself. Its medium must be as large as life itself, as rich as personality, and as unconscious of itself as true goodness always is. Truth must get its sounding-board through the vibration of a man's whole personality, and not primarily through his voice. Phrases have a hollow ring about them save as the world of which they are but as the paper currency substantiates itself through them in breathing, throbbing life.

A rich experience of grace, because it is so dynamic in character, is always a vibrating, quickening thing, and quite unrealized by its possessor it is insinuating its report of an ageless life to those within its range. God is "there" in it, giving "numinous" expression of Himself and conveying the grace of His spirit.

Authority springs directly out of the experience, and without assertion it mediates its healing and convincing power. Men may turn the edge of a message, but hardly the subtle impact of mediated love.

Mediation fits in to the genius of the truth to be conveyed, for religion is contact with a vibrant, personal reality who mediates His presence dynamically in the consciousness, making Himself known primarily through the tremors of the soul, though not apart from some realized truth.

Many years ago F. W. H. Meyers heard Dr.

Frederick Temple preach, and wrote after the service his impressions of the mediated grace he felt:

> For as he spake, I knew that God was near,
> Perfecting still the immemorial plan,
> As once in Jewry and for ever here,
> Loves, as He loved, and ends what He began.

A part of the story of evangelism's triumphs is necessarily missing. It is registered only in the history it created. All we can get are just hints of the presence of what can never be spoken.

You can read between the lines of the records something of what was there. Paul "delivering his own soul also," in his ministry "keeping back nothing"—nothing of the truth and nothing of himself; "offering himself as an oblation upon the altar of his people's faith," and doing it "joyfully."

You read of John Wesley's "eyes being filled with tears, his heart with love, and his mouth with arguments"—the mediation of the man's whole soul.

You get the description of Dinah Morris' eyes, as they turned on the people, "shedding love rather than making observations."

There seems undoubtedly a relationship between the depth at which we live and the influences which vibrate from us, undermining the complacency of a world enclosed within the flimsy shelter of the artificial stagery of an unreal world.

The preacher's peril is, as Dr. Denney puts it, of coming to men "in word only," saying things we do not feel, and which others, therefore, do not

feel; uttering truth—it maybe—but truth which has not done anything for us and which, as coming from our lips, cannot do anything for others.

George Fox refers to "professors who fed in words, and fed one another in words, but they trampled on the life."

A Creative experience always tends to communicate itself, though the experience is not itself transferable. The evidence of mediation is readily detected, being picked up by the receiving apparatus of the soul, though its way like "the way of an eagle in the air" can never be described or defined.

This form of ministry saves the honour of the truly personal in evangelism. It makes implicit recognition of the sacredness of the personality of men. It does not intervene; it is never indelicate, and its range is as large as life. Its method is "in and through" rather than "over against"; it interpenetrates and insinuates itself. It acts not by fiat but by the life force inherent in itself.

In proclamation we tend to hand truth across the counter—so to speak—ringing the coin of it in speech. In mediation truth is resonant in the personality which has given it embodiment. In this form it fittingly associates itself with "the charm" of grace. It also leaves room for the play of the freedom of the receiving soul since there is nothing in its form of ministry that "overbears."

When claims are made and authority obtrudes itself men become critical, but before a manifestation and mediation of Reality men everywhere bow. This form of impact undermines prejudice by coming

as an atmosphere in which its expressions wither. It bears its "open sesame" before all locked doors. None can withstand its diffusions, even as none can elude the fragrance of a rose. In disputations we are word-conscious and tend to revolve around our own closed system of thought and phrase, often only making contact with each other at the point of the sharp edge of words.

Here we touch in the fibres of the soul; for the organic and pervasive are its medium.

It is the argument of the "aura" and the "aureole." In it the voice is called in or not called in as the case may determine, but whenever it comes in it is but as supplementary, the weight does not rest there.

"Religion is caught not taught," as Dean Inge reminds us. It is not a Saga—a "say," but a new Creative Life of poignant and passionate love; and mediation is the indispensable form of its manifestation. Like love, mediation has no uniform expression, the occasion and the object conditions its form. Like love it is a true "universal" and is never irrelevant. Like love it defies all locks and bars, all resistance and resentment. And, like love, it "never faileth."

It represents our largest capacity. It makes possible our richest conveyance of life, since we cannot influence others by any gift that is less than ourselves. In it there is a propagation of the full personality in all its colours, tones, and vibrations. And the evangelical dominant is unmistakably disclosed, whenever it is present. It is

always "breaking through" in its own unique way, never conscious of what it owes to itself; conscious only of what it owes to Christ and to others. "Evangelism," it has been well said, "is not the communication of concepts, but the personal transmission of truths which are alive; it is really the communication of life."

And so in mediation evangelism lives in that of which it speaks. It has in it the play and passion of a Divine Life that is ever moving out beyond itself.

It is by effective mediation that God is made credible and lovable. People catch the love of God from us. However capable the Gospel may be of doctrinal and formal statement, its truest statement lies not in formulæ but in personal life. The truth to be conveyed is so charged with feeling attitudes and tonal qualities that it quite eludes expression except as it wins the alignment and attunement of the whole personality for its medium.

In the great passage in which Paul declares to the Ephesian Elders that he "kept back nothing," or "he shrank not," Prof. W. M. Macgregor suggests that he employs a word with a faintly nautical flavour, and that it may mean, "I did not lower my sails." The idea is too suggestive to let pass. The ministry of mediation calls for the full spreading of the canvas of the unreserved mind and the unqualified love. It asks of us the widest range of richly personal lives. "The wind of God that bloweth in the mind," calls for the wide-spread canvas; "the breath of the Spirit" making impact

upon our feeling attitudes calls for the fullest capacity of our emotional life.

A sub-personal, or fragmentary, or ill-related medium can never give to rich, full, personal truth an adequate opportunity of expression.

As those in life-relationship with Christ we are committed to the reality, priority and pervasiveness of the spiritual world. "The Life of the Ages" is the life for every age; for the restoration, renewal, and full realization of the Life that now is. And that Life becomes its own true witness as we live in it. It becomes real to us, and through us becomes real to others, as we breathe its air and share its life. So it puts us on our honour to make a full mediation of it. We are the "other foot," so to speak, of God's great enterprise.

But there is often the existence between us and that life of what the economists would call "a lag." We are the retarding limb. Often it is our want of yieldedness to the play of the powers of this life which causes "the lag." Sometimes it is our compartmental view of life which causes "the lag"; our unspiritual outlook or our narrow spirited outlook may cause it. Or may be it is due to our failure to let "the peace that passeth all understanding enlighten the understanding." Or we may "cause the lag" by "getting things in reverse," as e.g., by obtruding our formulations instead of insinuating our "Life." It may be due to our permission of neutral tracts in our mental or spiritual life, and so occasioning a deficiency in the wholeness of our impact.

"The penalty of intermittent loyalty to the truth," as Dr. Maltby reminds us, "is that others will neglect the truth we affirm and explore the truth we neglect."

Now that all the barriers are down in the world without; now that the old "faculty" view of the mind in psychology has yielded to a more truly unified view of personal life, we can less afford than ever to consent to any false division or artificial delimitation of our full personal life in our meditation of evangelism. The one spirit must suffuse all we think and speak and do.

Prof. Gossip uses very effectively in one of his books a story George Borrow tells. Borrow was lying on the deck of a Spanish vessel when he heard the Captain ask another man how many languages he knew. "Just one," said he. "Then it will be the Christian" (for that is the name they give to Spanish). "Yes," said the man, "I speak Christian, and that fellow lounging there can speak Christian too when he so cares, but the truth is, he is just as much at home, or more so, in the gibberish of the Moors and the Gipsies."

We can speak Christian too, but we too often are bi-lingual. We may speak in quite a good Christian accent in worship but content ourselves with "gibberish" in our works. We do not succeed in giving, say to business, "a Christian expression." We are all aware of the stupendous difficulty confronting us to-day in giving to industry and social relationships their Christian sense and accent. And yet we must not suffer ourselves to

rest content until every part of our complex life becomes a mediation of the spirit and life of our Lord. Our bi-lingual habit is occasioning for us some of our greatest dilemmas to-day. Time was, when healthful, skilful, conscientious labour fertilized the evangelical life. Sterilization of the spiritual sense too frequently seems to accompany our interchange in industry to-day. A prayerful and sympathetic concern should be ours towards all those who are honestly seeking to speak the Christian tongue in the relationship of industry and business to-day. They are as up against "principalities and powers" as ever the Early Church felt itself to be.

Mediation, however, cannot allow so operative a part of life as industry to speak in any gibberish of its own. It must speak the Christian tongue if we are to evangelize our age. To change our figure, it is the very "instep" of the other feet in the evangelizing enterprise. We cannot proceed far with "a fallen instep." We shall continue to "drag our foot," and can never have "the beautiful feet of the Gospel of peace" if industry lets us down.

As we are calling for wholeness in the interests of effective mediation in the personal life and in the sphere of industry, we must with even greater insistence call for wholeness in the Christian community. And this is where our gravest "sagging" in the line of our witness is disclosed.

"The Spiritual," by its very nature, always stands in need of a living embodiment and extension

in an organism. It requires to be envisaged in personal and communal life, if it is to make its appeal. It cannot exist in a vacuum. For its manifestation and mediation it must be combined. Oxygen can never be seen. It is an invisible element. It only makes a disclosure of itself when combined. When combined with iron we envisage it as rust ; when combined with sulphur we know it as sulphuric acid. And spiritual life as an invisible, quickening personal energy becomes visible only as it makes impact upon, and co-ordination with, some living character. As natural life beats and blushes in the blood and is unknown, except as manifested in the organism, so it is with spiritual life. It is visible only as it vitalizes.

Now a Church's function is the verification of God and the mediation of His life to men. It stands in a priestly relationship, and its ministry, to be saved from baldness, must ever be sacramental. It has a threefold task : to maintain its fellowship with God in Christ, to preserve its fellowship within itself, and to mediate its life towards men. The Church is to be the living, throbbing centre in which Divine grace and human need meet. The Gospel is never really expressed save as it is mediated, and its message is never " realistic " and forceful unless it is embodied and amplified in a Christian community which is a part and a counterpart of it. God's great utterance of sacrificing love can only find good transmission as the Church's fellowship reproduces and prolongs the spirit and service of the Cross in reconciling and self-renouncing action.

Only as preaching is conceived of as mediation can it be saved from being a mere performance. As Principal Forsyth used to insist: "Preaching must be an act prolonging the great act of the Cross, mediating it, conveying it." Our sermons are to be "action sermons" in which the work and spirit of Christ are to directly operate. All true expression of the message must come through organic mediation. We never really convey what we ourselves do not feel.

> Tis not enough that what you say is true,
> To make us feel it, you must feel it too.

And here we touch the nerve of that which manifests itself in all great evangelical preaching.

The words of Bunyan will be remembered: "I went, myself in chains, to preach to them in chains, and carried that fire in my conscience that I persuaded them to beware of."

In the *Early Letters of Marcus Dods*, we are told of a memorable morning at the High Church, Edinburgh, when, in delivering a Sacramental Address, Dr. Rainy almost broke down under the emotions which surged in his spirit. The letter says, when he came to the words "poor lost sinners" his voice wavered, and he had just enough left to go "through the forms." And this was not the emotion of a man whose feelings readily overflowed. He was like Dods in that respect, and Dods "never said 'Oh!' except the normal state of his feelings was at that height."

Upon countless pages of biography the truth is

written large that the measure of our conveyance of evangelical truth is always in the proportion in which "God does beseech men by us."

Mediation has its vital part in the creation of a sense of sin. As it is the chief mean for breaking up indifference and obstinacy, so it is the medium for the inducing a new sensitiveness to the sinfulness of sin. We are to mediate an apprehension men do not feel by being ourselves possessed by it. No small part of the prophetic ministry in ancient days was to be a "portent" of coming events, the shadows of which had already crossed the prophet's sensitive soul. "Son of Man," came the word of the Lord to Ezekiel, "I have made thee an omen." He was bidden to sigh before his people with a heart-breaking bitter sigh, and when they asked him why he sighed he was to say: "Bad news. Evil is coming." The prophets involved themselves continually in the truth of the message they spoke, representing themselves dramatically as standing in with their word. Their deep and exquisite sense of God's holiness propagated itself because it had first penetrated their own soul.

Temple Gairdner of Cairo wrote: "I find the indifference of the Moslem to Christ's sufferings most shocking. How shall I rouse them if I am not pierced by it?"

He had to create a new sense in the Moslem conscience, for to them God was impassive. And for the creation of a new and poignant sense of sin the Spirit makes mediation of it through us.

No word of John Wesley's finds in one's heart

a deeper echo than that in which he tells us that he never preached to others of their sins without holding his own before his eyes. It is only such kind of preaching that saves the hearer from the reaction and resistance of one who says: "So I am the accused!" The mark of all great evangelism is that it gets alongside, as Jesus in His Baptism "stood in" with sinners, in an identification which sets no limits to the extent to which it is ready to involve itself.

This truth has very effective representation in the lives of all the really great Evangelists. The one I choose is from D. L. Moody. Dr. Campbell Morgan tells how Dr. Dale once said to him as he sat in the great theologian's study: "I think I have only known one Evangelist whom I thought had the right to speak of a lost soul and he was D. L. Moody. He never speaks of the possibility of a man being lost without tears in his voice."

Fierce denunciation of sin is strangely ineffective; judgment can only be truly mediated in quiet, plaintive heart-broken constraint. When the "air of consequence" and dictation rest upon us, and when we give the impression of "sitting assuredly above the floods," we are quite unfitted for this kind of ministry.

The story of how Moses' anger once flamed out against the sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar, is one we do well to take to heart for it enshrines this truth. Moses was angry with them "because they had burnt the sin-offering and not eaten it, seeing it was given to them to bear the iniquity

of the congregation." Their failure was that they had not identified themselves with the sins and needs of the people whose offerings they had burnt.

Our failure often lies just there. We have not taken home to our hearts and made our own the deeper sorrows of our fellows, and the real burden of their sin. We have not eaten their sin-offering; we have only burnt it.

What the "many say" is continually in our ears. Echoes of what the Psalmist heard in the life around him we are hearing still. "Many there be which say: 'There is no help for him in God.'" "There be many that say: 'Who will show us any good?'" We dwell in no sound-proof chambers. The murmurs of unbelieving scorn come to us even at our prayers in the suggestion that there is no "objective reality" responsive to us at all.

We can never adequately answer what the "many say" by our "say," much less by "hear-say." On that level "one man's word is pretty much as good as another's."

We cannot answer what the "many say" either by attempting to eliminate mystery from our Christian Faith or "analysing it down to the ground."

We cannot answer them by occupying their own ground in setting out our faith in terms of its "utility values."

Our only adequate answer is in mediating the life and the values it refuses to think are possible. We must exhibit, through our mediation, the life which while it demands explanation also eludes it.

We must mediate "reality," producing in demonstration the fact. There is no other sufficient answer.

Our mediation is sadly defective. The transmission is poor. The first reason of that is we have not been "enraptured out of ourselves." We get out of ourselves only as we are enraptured out. The rapturous sense of God in Jesus Christ is our way out and it is the only way. The "glory that excelleth" must take the "shine" out of us. Our consciousness of ourselves often obtrudes and, like the influence of "atmospherics" in wireless, makes transmission poor. Dr. Denney's words cannot be repeated too often: "No man can witness to himself and to Christ at the same time; no man can give the impression that he is clever and that Christ is wonderful, at one and the same time."

David Quest, in *The Uncertain Trumpet*, comes at length to see that it is just here where his mistake has been. We get him saying to his wife: "A great name *in* the Church—no! A great name *for* the Church; help me, Roddy, to remember."

Often, too, we have failed in mediation because we have not kept "the common touch." Marcus Dods challenged his own heart about "Preaching to people and yet feeling no connection with them."

And besides all this, only to mention what deserves far more adequate treatment—how can we mediate a ministry of reconciling love to people when we outrage the wholeness of our message by the sectional and party character of our feeling within the life of the Christian Community itself.

It is possible to impair transmissions not only by the obtruding of our formulations, but by the obtrusion of our differences and our institutions, our "orders" and our rubric. We never give to this life relationship its adequate mediation until we come to see that:

> Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things.

4. *Evangelism making its Theological Formulations.*

Formulations are best represented as a background in our evangelizing task. Whenever they take the foreground obtrusively they become a peril and a menace. If we allow formulations to acquire an unrelieved rigidity they tend to associate themselves with two unhelpful and indeed injurious tendencies. They are accompanied by what the psychologists call a "fixation" in the consciousness, and they intervene to make our evangelical appeal forbidding. A formula is a good thing, but it may become a right thing in a wrong place.

There is a strong desire in us all to appeal to some authoritative standard. It ends doubt and discussion. The appeal is always for "a sure word" couched in some distinct and definite series of phrases. It is not anything like as convenient to make our standard a Personal Life, and yet in the last analysis, our authoritative codes can only be "proximates"; the ultimate authority lies in Our Living Lord.

It is a necessity of the mind that we should

formularize. In the interests of the clear grasp of truth we must do it, as in the interests of clear and crisp expression of the things we most surely believe. But we can never afford to forget that all our doctrines are derived from the life-experience of the soul with God in Christ, and that there can be nothing really essential in our propositions which has not its source in that Life, as experienced by believers. Truth must be brought out of the haze into the mind and conceived and expressed with conceptual clearness, but must ever return to the fountain of its beginnings in its relationships of life with Christ.

Our fathers entered the lists, it has been said, "horsed on dogma." We must go out, to use James Smetham's graphic phrase: "To ride high on the white horse of salvation." "Doctrine," we must have, but "we ride to a fall," in these days horsed on it alone, Our doctrine must sit behind us, accompanying, but not obtruding itself.

It is always a mistake to present doctrine as if it were itself the ground of faith. God's revelation has always been primarily disclosed in Personality, and our doctrines, though a necessary growth out of what has been revealed in personal life, can never assume any other than a secondary and derivative value. They represent in testimony what is the true "constant" in the Church's experience of Christ. The tendency has always been for the sense of the truly "sacred" thing discovered in our experience of God to spread itself indiscriminately over the whole of the formulations which have been

drawn as the fruitful issue of that experience. And these have been set up as a criterion and test. Sometimes indeed they have been thought to be sufficient of themselves to produce faith in others. But we can never afford to let a formula represent our standard. Intense life always transcends its forms, and in time renders them obsolete. The Living Christ, as He is the Crown of Revelation, must also be the criterion and the final test of truth.

The Creeds must never be treated as if they represented the gateway to salvation. They are but its symbols and its testimonies. To make demands of conformity to any system of words is to sin grievously against the Spirit of our Lord.

It nevertheless must be insisted upon that so long as men live in the vital relationship of the Christian Life they will, persistently and systematically, endeavour to clarify the convictions by which they live; and they must continue to do so.

What does not hold the mind will soon lose its hold upon the heart. We can never finally succeed in living on one level and thinking on another.

And then, for purposes of the propagation of faith, there must always be an attempt to give additional force to creative experience by making its forms intelligible. Definiteness and indeed decisiveness of thought and statement are needed for effective evangelism—always providing that they rest on a true insight into essential truth. We know too well the danger attending all vagueness and indecisiveness in religious thinking, a fault like that which Goldwin Smith attributed

to Jowett of Balliol. "There was," he said, "no clinch in his mind."

Further, truth also "grows upon our hands," and in the process of its growth some of its forms have to be given up for better, after the manner of the process represented in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second."

The great Revivals of the past, as Dr. Rattenbury reminds us, have preached what would be called a "Pauline" Gospel. And to-day we see, better than before, that the essence of Paul's experience was not adequately expressed in the juristic and legal relationship terms he used, but was fundamentally embodied in the great truth of his mystical relationship with Christ. And what was fundamental and essential for Paul is equally fundamental and essential for us. The Apostle's interpretation of a restored life-relationship in Christ is the true norm for an adequate doctrine of salvation.

Many of the outworn definitions of our evangelical theology are tending to hamper us to-day, and it is in the interests of "the truth as it is in Jesus" that we use terms that are more adequate. Our fathers did good business with them, indeed they sometimes came to regard them as part of their "stock-in-trade." The peril was that everything was "cut and dried." The facts of spiritual experience were strung upon the doctrinal framework too rigidly. Not a little of the power our fathers wielded was due to the assurance with which they uttered the doctrines of the evangelical faith.

Their certitude had a sure ground in their experience, and their hearers felt the mediation of reality through their words.

To use these words in just their way is not now possible for us. To do so would be "putting words between the truth and ourselves." Our loyalty to Christ demands that a derived element should not play usurper. His life in us has a sovereignty of its own which brooks no rival. A dynamic life like that we have in Christ must find its own forms; forms must not imprison energy. This Life in Christ is the Ultimate and the Whole and both determine every formulation and lead every other blessing by the hand.

Our plea is for a theology which keeps close to the living personality alike of God in Christ and man, which leaves aside what is stiffly precise and inert, and which concentrates on what is personal and organic, and uses terms which are more poetic than propositional, more visual than technical.

It may be thought that we would thus open the door for looseness; that the freedom would involve us in risks, but the greater perils lie on the other side. At all costs we must give the truth "free course," and at all costs we must "connect." A theology with "He that hath the Son hath the Life" as the central principle is along the line of what we need. We must bring order into our religious thinking, but it must be a dynamic order. And what is dynamic is not shadowy and dim. Whilst we cannot use certain analogies which have sharp outlines and edges, it is not because they

are so decisive that we reject them, but because they are decisive at the wrong place and in the wrong way they divide up "the life."

We are not pleading for dimness or vagueness. There is too much truth in the dictum: "The dimly said is the dimly thought," to allow of that. Let us go for our thought forms not to the propositional terms of logic, but to the warm and vital terms of organic and personal life.

With no desire in the world to put away the ancient creeds of the Church, one feels grateful that our approach to Jesus is not through them. They present us with a too theological Christ. I do not go the length of saying, as one has said recently, that the Fathers made Christ their Mannequin and used Him to show off their Creations. That would be unfair to the historic situation in which these Fathers found themselves in grim fight for fundamental truth as it was revealed to them; unfair, too, because they felt shut up to the use of the thought-forms of their age. But in our presentation of Jesus, with the New Testament before us, we must "put on Him His own clothes." As Dr. Maltby reminds us: "For centuries the Church was hardly in the possession of the reality of our Lord's humanity and, therefore, the Synoptic Gospels lost the better part of their meaning." Dr. Gwatkin tells us that even Athanasius discussed Christ entirely as a theological Person, never otherwise referring to incidents of His life.

To-day our approach is through "the life" rather than primarily through the formulations.

It is a course not unattended by dangers peculiar to itself, but it is in line with the true genius of our faith. If it leaves us freer it puts us more upon our honour.

The ancient creeds defined Christ in terms of God, assuming that He was already known. We reverse the process and define God as the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We know almost nothing of God apart from Jesus, but we read Him through the Person and Life and Work of Jesus.

And Jesus is final for us, as Dr. Streeter puts it: "Not as having arrived at the end of the journey, but as having once for all discovered the right road." Everything is conditioned by the God we envisage, and for us God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To present Jesus, to preach Christ, to our age is our task, and never has a more glorious opportunity of doing so presented itself. We see Him in the Gospels as we have never seen Him before. He has no rivals in the world to-day. He has the ear of the whole earth.

It is in the Cross where the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is seen supremely and luminously. There we see that sacrificing love is the true character of God's power, the only kind of power that God can use in dealing with men. There is no pomp or pageantry, no show of force by which God would drive men to His will. We see that God's way of dealing with sin is to take it upon His own heart and let it sound its judgment within His own spirit.

In the light of the Cross we see that Christ's experience was a deepening identification with the sinful. It is in the Cross that Christ reaches us in the deepest depths of our need and sin where the shadows of guilt gather in darkness upon our soul. In the Incarnation He was made flesh ; in His dying " He was made sin " ; leading to nothing less than an identification with us in the most poignant of human experiences : the experience in which God's reaction against sin is finally expressed.

Who are we that we should limit the power of identification possessed by such a love as His in that action by which " He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself " ? In that identification of Himself with us in sacrificing love we see both the movement of God's holy love towards us and the reaction of His holy love against sin.

There is revelation of love there, but also of judgment ; for God's way of dealing with sin is the culminating point of His disclosure of Himself.

And as one has said—I think it is Prof. H. R. Mackintosh—the New Testament is inspired by the conviction that not only has a new thing been discovered, but that something new has happened, something new has been done, something that makes this world another world, and has changed the balance of the human situation and " put us on top."

And " the Cross not only reveals forgiving love, it conveys forgiveness and renders it effective." In Christ's whole contact with man during the days of His flesh, His method was that of self-identification

with the sinful He forgave, and in the Cross that principle is the key to all.

"There is in God a moral necessity that forgiveness should be mediated through active condemnation. In all great forgiveness there is enshrined a great agony."

Our forgiveness and our fellowship alike are set in the context of the Cross. In all the relationship-life of the Christian with Christ, the believer is always finding sounding in his soul the compassions and the compunctions of the Cross.

The direct penalty accompanying sin is alienation from God. But God's heart, even as David's, "devised means whereby His banished one might return." What the situation demanded was a fresh creative act from the side of God. In view of what had happened in the affront to His Law and Love by our sin a supreme creative act was necessary, and in the identification of Christ with us in the Cross that creative act was forthcoming. Forgiveness and fellowship are received and realized there, and salvation is the inclusive term which covers the experience of the new life of reconciliation and restored relationships.

As distinctions in thought we may represent salvation in terms of justification, sanctification, regeneration and adoption.

There is always the peril, however, of separating when we distinguish. All these are integral parts of the new life relationship in Christ. No formulations are ever really adequate which obscure that fundamental fact.

The story is told of how Bishop Westcott was once walking peacefully down the main street of Bishop Auckland when he was suddenly stopped by a hot gospeller who, greatly daring, asked him if he was saved. To the amazement of his questioner, instead of being devoured on the spot, the Bishop leaned comfortably on his stick and, with a pleasant smile, said: "That is a most interesting question. But do you mean *Sōsthetai* or *Sesōsmenos*? for there is a great difference, you know." The man fled. "Saved" and "being saved" are both included in the great and gracious life-relationship we know as salvation. And "sonship" is the even fuller and richer name of the new relationship. The theological framework which represents salvation predominantly as "an escape," is by no means without its justification, but as being far too negative and narrow it must yield to a more adequate conception in which the truth contained in the older view must not be lost.

Prof. Mackintosh says: "The doctrine of justification by faith, not necessarily under that title, has a way of turning up with new majesty and power in every period of revival; when religion sinks in apathy—its romance and glory dimmed—this is one of the first convictions to lose vigour and passion."

In a recent questionnaire on "What is Evangelism?" an attempt was made to discover what precisely were the elements of new majesty and power which return with each re-discovery of this truth.

Perhaps the best answer is to be found in a comparison which Dr. Dale drew between Moody's Mission in 1875 and the same missioner's campaign in 1884. "In 1875," he writes, "from Moody's Mission I received about 200 converts into communion, and I reckon that 75 per cent. have stood well. On his last visit, 1884, I have not received a dozen as yet. I do not see the shining faces now in this Mission, and he preaches repentance more. In 1875 he exulted in the free grace of God. The grace was to lead men to repentance. Men leapt out of darkness into the marvellous light and lived a Christian life afterwards. The 'do penance' preaching has had no such results. I wrote Moody about this a few weeks ago, and he said it has 'set him a-thinking' and he wanted to talk it over with me."

Surely the essential and seminal truth in "justification by faith" is "the free grace of God moving towards us in the Cross of our Lord, offering us forgiveness and fellowship at its own cost.

There can be no evangelism without that truth, though the ancient phrase is unfitted to convey it effectively to the men of our time.

At a recent Ministerial Association Meeting the question was discussed as to where Liberal Theology had failed. It was recognized that these were days in which all our Theologies and Gospels were being "proved," and their weaknesses discovered. The fatal weakness in Liberal Theology, it was shown, was that it had allowed the heat of religion to escape. It was bound to be challenged along that line.

The formulations of Liberal Evangelical Theology are more acceptably construed than those of an older day. But it has lost its heat; it doesn't evangelize; and therein it fails, and fails at the place where its failure is most tragic.

It has failed through not realizing that the presence of the Spirit of God is to be found in heat as well as light; that the Christian revelation is a sublimation of both, and whenever one of the complementary elements is missing there is bound to be failure. And in Evangelical Experience heat is primal.

## CHAPTER VII.

### The Changing Conditions of our Time, our Reactions to them, and our New Approach to the Task of Evangelism.

IT seems necessary at this stage to turn ourselves about and to take in the situation amid which our work of evangelism is to be undertaken. For it must needs be fulfilled in face of the full situation which presents itself to us in the thought and temper of our time. We must know our constituency as well as our Gospel ; must know the life about us with which we are to "connect," since the quality of life in Christ Jesus is to touch and transform all our life relationships.

As humanity has struck its tents and is once again on the march, the Church is quivering throughout in reaction to the shocks of change. Dr. Maltby has reminded us that "this is not a time to be smoothing our beds, but a time to be packing our bags or picking up our baggage." And what greatly complicates the situation is that we react in such differing ways, and with such differing speed to these shocks of change. Some are pushing the

advance, others are digging themselves in. Men are engaged cancelling each other out, undoing what some one else has done; and throughout Christendom people may be at any one of half a dozen different stages of thought and action—and all these differences are often represented in the particular Churches we are serving.

Some of this may perhaps be inevitable, and forms part of the discipline which is to prepare us for the new position we are to take up, but meanwhile it seems to render much of our labour null and void.

When an army strikes camp and treks there is widespread confusion. The roads are congested, the swifter arms of the service are retarded by the slower. False starts are made; one section advances too far and must retire to take up its rightful position in the general formation. And the problem, like that of the streets, is not only in respect of "cross traffic," but the different speeds at which those travelling in the same direction are prepared to go.

The fact that we fulfil our task of evangelism in a transitional age represents at once our difficulty and our opportunity. A "transitional age" is by analogy not unlike the period of adolescence, when "one is not at one with oneself," owing to there being in conjunction with general change an unequal growth of the various powers of the organism, and everything is too raw and new to be rationally related. Under such conditions we feel all unloosed and ill-compacted, our powers having become too

unwieldy and complex to be brought under real control. We are developing out of the "old" without having as yet made a unified acquaintance with the new.

We have reached a stage which, by analogy, is like that we see being undertaken on the roads. *The change* in the form and weight of traffic has come with such surprising suddenness that the old lightly made and winding roads no longer serve, and so everywhere roadmakers are to be seen straightening out, widening, and reconstructing over all the land.

"Events always tend to outrun our adjustments" at such times. The difficulty we are finding in religion is common to all spheres of thought and activity. Century old business houses are being put to the proof more severely even than more recently established firms, and it is everywhere being realized that an organism or organization that cannot adequately meet a change in its environment is bound to fail.

Evangelism at this hour has an unequalled opportunity of "making the future in the present," moulding the life of the age and the ages to come—if only it is enriched through a new Creative Experience and becomes at once adventurous and adaptive in face of "a world of change."

A situation of "transition" is always a test of the true dynamic. The power that can demonstrate itself to be the true "ultimate and universal" has an unequalled chance for patterning the new age according to the law of its own energy. The

stage is set in the malleability of the time for the disclosure of what *is* the Gospel which contains within it "the power of God unto salvation"—a salvation interpreted in its deepest, fullest, and widest sense.

Youth in adolescence is always open to the appeal of the romantic and heroic; even as also an age set free from the leading strings of an externally imposed authority like ours can be seen to be. Only, the dynamic must get its necessary conditions of manifestation and mediation fulfilled in us if it is to challenge the spirit of our age.

Youth is free to devote itself as never before because free from the cramping conditions of convention. It is free to be won by the truth that can show itself to have urgency and authority on its side.

Youth is bent on facing facts, and the Gospels are open as never before for the appreciation of the fact of Christ, if only the fact of Christ can be given its counterpart in adventurous souls, and in an adventurous society living in His spirit and doing His will.

Youth is bent on seeing things for itself and with its own eyes, not through the dimming glasses of a formula, or of a tradition; so if we can present Jesus in His creative power youth may find Him to be more glorious a thousand times than ever we have represented Him to be. Of course we too must be free to give the fullest embodiment of the life in Christ in our age unhampered by custom or by tradition. We too must be free to make

our method appropriate to its end and to make ourselves intelligible in the terms of life.

The soil is clearer than ever before of hard resistances, and the seed we sow in this transitional day may bring forth not thirty or sixty merely but an hundredfold—which hundredfold may, as Dr. Glover suggests, cover people who carry out the ideas of Jesus farther than others.

### 1. *The Changing Conditions of Thought challenge us to take opportunity by the hand.*

A new Creative Life would enable us to take opportunity by the hand. In days of low religious vitality we serve as tradition dictates instead of "doing as occasion serves." With the incoming of a fuller life our appreciation of the situation would be keener and our adjustment to its demands more speedy. Take the most notable feature of our time—the questioning of all authority. Rightly viewed and answered it could be made to "turn to us for a testimony." At the back of this questioning mood is, naturally, the not ungrounded suspicion that authority has too often been vested in the wrong hands. The "formula" has embodied it rather than the "force"; the interested have held it to maintain their prestige; doctrinaires have used it to save their face from the shame the disclosure of facts would bring. Too often it has been indiscriminately used to overbear the enquiring mind. Of course it is impossible for

a revolution to proceed in one department of knowledge without its repercussions being felt in religion. The centre of gravity in thought has changed from the reverence of tradition to the supreme regard of "fact."

And in the process, with experiment as the "magic wand," the universe has opened its secrets to us in a way impossible to conceive before. Within the Church the influence of the questioning mind is meanwhile very disturbing. As Prof. Burkitt puts it: "The old ship may come to surer moorings in due time, but while the anchor is being drifted both crew and passengers have an anxious time."

Now, as we have seen, the final authority for religion and life lies in the Creative Experience of God in Jesus Christ. That authority must sound itself amid the general uncertainty and confusion. We cannot live our own life and be free, we must own life's true authority. And its deep self-authenticating tones must sound out amid the questionings of our age.

This Creative Life has the "right"; we are to give it the conditions of its "power." We are to lead the world to enjoy God not in sundered parts of His scheme, but in all the life of the whole, by leading men to discover Him where alone He can be fully known.

In its questioning of authority, it has been said, this generation is engaged in "poking out the ashes of the fire to let in the free air." They feel that the fire is choked with burnt-out matter.

Of course when a mood like this is in the ascendant it goes too far and stops at nothing. The danger is of their doing what Maurice was wont to do in one of his violent thought-moods. In complete unconsciousness he would poke at the fire until the whole of the contents of the grate, red embers as well as grey ashes, were deposited on the hearth-stone beside the fender, and only a sense of the chilliness of the room would awaken him to a sense of what he had done.

Under the guise of "a passion for reality," this "poking" is proceeding most vigorously to-day, more vigorously indeed than discriminately. Few passions are unmixed, and this "passion for reality" would be of course worthier of its name if its policy of "thorough" was carried forward in all directions rather than just in one or two. But even so it presents a much finer opportunity for a vital evangelism than does a spirit of smug complacency. In the process of "poking," burning embers have been cast out with the dead ashes, and life for many is beginning to seem somewhat "chill."

Nothing will meet the situation except an evangelism with a great burning centre of reality like that which is found in the Gospel of Christ.

Dr. Fosdick tells how a friend once said to him: "When I go to some evangelical Churches my intelligence is insulted. When I go to a modernist Church my soul is starved." "Why," asks the doctor, "should a man need to have presented to him that alternative?"

In a fervent and fearless-thoughted Evangelism our true hope lies.

When an engineer is laying his roads through the mountains he always seeks out and follows the course of the streams, taking advantage of the paths that have been worn by the flow of nature's forces. So we shall discover that our road of advance is being marked for us by the movements of our times. The very forces which may make for our undoing may be made to serve as our means of guidance, and turned to our account as we construct our new communicating roads in these changed days of ours.

It is always the way of a great dynamic personality to turn his liabilities into assets, and that is also the way creative experience always proceeds. The Early Church, and in particular the Apostle Paul, found the tracks laid for them in the situation of their time. They allowed the conditions of the hour to shape their strategy, making all things serve their end as they seized the initiative by the hands of their adventurous faith. The old order of the world is ruptured, and the nature of the new order will depend upon our ability to turn the new forces that are at work towards spiritual ends.

Luther Burbank, the Californian horticulturist, tells us that the wild growth of the world is the parent stem of all development. We must make our graft of spiritual purpose on to the sturdy branch of some great natural and intellectual growth.

Or, to once more change the figure, the floods are out, the barriers are down. We must ride the element which else would sink us; we must use the rush of the waters—God's waters, shall we say—to bear us towards our objective.

The New Psychology is a mighty energy in the life of to-day. It has great vogue and power, and deservedly so. Its intensive study of human nature and its dynamic base has transformed much of our thinking. Evangelism has the "right," if it will but possess itself of the "power," to utilize these great discoveries as a means for the prosecution of its adventurous task. For the moment in its analysis of experience it threatens Religion by its assumption (quite outside its true range of enquiry) that religious experience can be dissipated into the subjective. It explains religion, that is, by explaining it away. The presentation of Spiritual Reality in unmistakable power would, however, make such gratuitous assumptions look rather "pale."

But in many ways it has helped us to appreciate the true nature of our work, the conditions of our appeal, and its first stupendous service is that it has helped us to overthrow the fiction of pure reason by showing personality to have a dynamic rather than a rational base. A new sense has been created of how our prejudices and preferences and desires tend to intervene to turn the scales of judgment in our thinking The blind worship of intellectual processes is now impossible, and the prestige of reason, viewed in its narrower sense,

has fallen. From the point of view of the older psychology, man was still regarded as a rational being—almost as an annex of the reason. The problem then was to discover why man ever acted differently. But now, starting with the truth of the dynamic or instinctive basis of personality, the new psychology proceeds to show how it comes to be that man can act rationally and how too his rational purity is always more or less coloured if not stained by instinctive desire. Such a conception, whilst always presupposed in religion, is revolutionary in its effects upon our appreciation of our Creative Experience and our fulfilment of our Evangelistic task. Spelled out fully it means much more than we can say here, but it sets in clearest light the fact of the dynamic nature of our faith, and the secondary place formulation should take. It enables us to see better that we can never hope to hold men by our appeal to reason alone : "That we cannot get a man to drive his will harder than he has driven it himself." We see more clearly the adjustments of method we are to make if our appeal is to win the full acceptance of men.

How precarious, too, is an unspiritualized and unmoralized personality when the fact of the instinctive basis of character is considered. Man does not cease to be largely the creature of his instincts when he becomes rationalized, but only when the deeper centre of his being is "spiritual." The deranged balance of a man's instincts can only be unified and harmonized through a great creative

and dynamic life, and as personality gathers about its true centre in the life and love of God. "Man's unity is not an initial but a terminal point." Personality is but formal, and but a bundle of ill-related parts until grace enters to refine and control.

How illuminating, too, is it to see in the light of this study how all attempts to impose authority are a violation of personal rights, and are bound to arouse contra-suggestions to defeat it.

We see, too, how grave a menace to the stability of the inner life fear may be in the neurosis it forms, and how careful evangelism must be in the use of a method, brought greatly into service in past days, which got the name sometimes of "putting the fear of God into people."

We see how blindly purposive consciousness may be: striving for satisfaction and yet not knowing what it wants until demonstration of the reality it seeks is mediated to it; how bound it is by its dynamic character to seek through "substitute satisfaction" what it fails to find in Reality.

Equally clear is it how in "rationalization" the instincts use the mind and conscience as "their accomplices rather than as their guide"; how our vital preferences, deeper than our coherent thinking, lead us to "justify ourselves," so that we unconsciously give good reasons but not the real reasons of our actions. We have always known of course that we could not escape the structure of our own minds, but we did not realise how self-deceptive we could be in the very structure and quality of

our being. It is no little thing to possess in a scientific analysis of human nature the truth that "the heart is deceitful above all things." We always have suspected, but never realized, how far we project our feelings and our constructions into the outer world, and how far from getting an unvarnished report of "what a thing is like," by the very urgency of our desire, it only "tells us what we like"; how our interests facilitate some processes and inhibit others; how too we start from rather than reach out towards our conclusions.

We can see too with what fatal facility much of our thought may consist in making one thing mean another, and how sensitively cultivated must be the honour of the soul: "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts." It reminds one of a remark once made by Sir James Mackenzie to a friend of his: "The people to be really feared are not those who oppose your ideas but those who make them mean what they want."

Our instincts have in them the pulse of the race and of a far back past, but they themselves are not evil but the necessary ground of our being. In their disordered balance, however, they are the raw material of sin. We see, too, how necessarily we retain "our multiple heart" except as a great creative love unites it, by winning our full allegiance; how certain it is that unless our nature be rightly "polarised" a false "polarity" will result in either fear or prejudice.

Forgiveness, too, is more clearly seen to be the only remedy for sin. The old cry: "Oh, don't

rake up the past, let's go on to the next step, that's all that matters," is shown to be essentially false ; for a past not faced and forgiven is bound to cause trouble.

Repression, as a conception, has much light to give us, though it is in danger of abuse through being misunderstood and having wrong inferences drawn from it in justification of self-indulgence. The psychologist uses repression in a technical sense, and if he speaks of peril associated with it he is not thinking of self-restraint, which is an entirely necessary form of discipline. No ! The psychologist has in view developing instincts, mainly, of the growing child. These seek their designed outlet in vigorous self-expression, but when thwarted—through the presence of some countering instinct, as from being unwisely proscribed from without—they may be driven into the unconscious self, where they work harm, and havoc may be as a " complex."

This conception has much value for us in many ways. It indicates the fatal deficiency of a gospel that deals mainly with negatives that never get down to the depths where the secret desires of the heart are transformed. It makes evident the need of a Gospel of positiveness : " Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

When the instinctive desires are merely inhibited they gather force by being " pent up," and sooner or later break through the guard of the will. The only really effective way of deliverance is the transformation and sublimation of the nature

through the power of a new Creative Life—in a word, by "a change of heart."

We have to reckon in these days on the demand being made that we should present our Christian faith reasonably. The demand is legitimate and we must meet it. And what we mean by the reasonable presentation of Christianity is not the arraying of the truth in strictly logical form, but rather the presentation of it as all-of-a-piece with and truly harmonious with the rest of our assured knowledge. Since truth is one and Jesus is the Truth, "Christianity must stand to reason" in that larger, fuller way if it is to win acceptance.

Now there was a time when Science was disposed to set faith and reason against each other as mutually exclusive, and to set off its method of reason as the only legitimate means for the apprehension of truth. It tended to dispute the legitimacy of faith in the realm of the appreciation of truth altogether; and insisted that our findings in religion should be amenable to the strict surveillance of the abstract reason. "You must come down to us to get your Religious instruments sharpened" was its Philistine attitude. And if Science could it would, at one time, have put out both our eyes.

But that is not the situation now. We see and Science sees that both Faith and Reason have their part to play, and that they act as the counterpoise and complement of each other. Science we see rests as surely on faith as Religion does. At its beginning it took over from Religion's belief

in one God the idea of the unity of the universe. It needs, in order to take its first step, to have faith that sense is bringing to it a true report of the external world, and that the universe, rightly conceived, "makes sense." Its method of reaching truth by means, first of all, of "sounding its steps before it," by formulating a hypothesis and then submitting it to experiment is analogous to the process we adopt in the religious sphere in seeking to apprehend the truth. Faith is the pioneering instinct both in Religion and Science—the creative thing. "Faith," as Principal Jacks puts it, "is Reason turned adventurous." The image of the blind man "sounding his steps before him" perhaps represents the relationship of Faith and Reason as well as anything else. Faith precedes in its "soundings" the steps of Reason in both spheres.

Faith is the adventuring faculty in both regions, and in both alike it can never act safely except as Reason follows in its footsteps. Faith must never despise Reason, and overbear it, nor must Reason despise Faith.

"Faith is the affirmation and the act which makes eternal truth be present fact." Reason is the process by which "the affirmation and the act" are shown to have "good warrant" in our whole conception of the universe and in the unity of our thought.

Huxley's words about "sitting down before a fact as a little child," being prepared to give up every preconceived notion and following truth humbly wherever it may lead, will be remembered.

"Science," says Canon Streeter, "is a great cleanser of human thinking: it makes impossible any religion but the highest."

The "open face" it presents to facts, and the tireless enthusiasm with which it pursues them, presents itself as a splendid object-lesson to Religion. Facts are allowed to speak for themselves and create their own full impression on the mind. Nothing is more needed to-day than that we should set ourselves as little children before the great creative fact of Christ—particularly in this time of transition when we have not grown set in any new way as yet—and let Him make His own impression upon us. We ask not that He be seen through any formularies in which we have represented our faith in Him, but just seen as He *is*, with "His own clothes on Him." If we gave to Jesus the sincerity and simplicity of mind Science presents in face of the facts of the physical world, we should perceive His colossal significance, and see Him to be what He indeed is, the great creative fact of the universe. And if we took Jesus in earnest, as the scientist takes his facts, how speedily would this whole order of the world be transformed.

"From Fact to Faith" would be the order of our steps; and then from faith to a reasoned harmonization of the whole. But, as Dean Inge reminds us: "No fact, however patent, is ever real to us save as we give it attention." Our fault to-day is that we are not giving to Jesus the chance to impress us, and hence we are not adventurous in His name.

Prof. Whitehead points out, too, how Science has to return again and again to fact and experience, "not to schoolmaster them," but to learn freshly "the limits of its own explanations." So, too, must we be always on the way back, both to the fact of Christ and the experiment of experience, to learn the limit of our previous formulations. Such an interaction is the only way of safety and of strength.

The first impact of new truth always seems to us like the encroachment of error. "The coming of new truth," as Dr. Maltby says, "never is by way of mere addition to our stock, as though a new field were added to our farm. Always the new truth hits some old boundaries, and this is why we usually go out to meet 'an unfamiliar truth with a gun in our hand.'"

Research into the historical basis of our Christian faith has often been resented; but illegitimately so. If faith must stand to reason so a historical religion must submit its facts to the tests by which all history is given its credential. Only so can a historic faith find its home in the world. And our Faith asks no favour, seeks no partial treatment; it can stand upon its own feet—indeed it can only proceed in this world by standing so. Of course that means that many of our old theories do not fit the facts. All the worse then for the theories. Facts are God's angels; we dare not, like Balaam, try to override them. We shall suffer injury if we do.

To acknowledge the rights of research into the

facts of Holy Scriptures does not mean that we allow the pre-supposition that everything shall be explained in terms of the natural. No; the true attitude of Science is to let facts make their own impression. And the facts when left to give their own message and meaning will give evidence of the supernatural power at work in and through them. We must remember however that all the rest of our knowledge of God's action leads us to see that God's characteristic way is not to dart in and out of things, intervening here and there, but to move in and through the course of events. The best clues to take to the examination of Scripture, as to every realm of knowledge, are these: First, God reveals Himself through personality, and Second, He makes Himself known dynamically—that is, in action—through historical processes.

We have everything to gain in our task of evangelism if we grasp these two master conceptions of the way God moves to make Himself known. The great truth of Holy Scripture becomes our great power for this service, as we grasp these two facts.

### 2. *Changed Social Conditions present us with our Problem and our Opportunity.*

We have seen how that in the realm of thought new opportunities present themselves for the fresh undertaking of our task. The swift changes in this region have kept us busy in the revising of our

formulations. Facts have been coming in every hour. It reminds one of the situation with which most of us are familiar at the close of a Sale of Work—when the treasurer's accounts are being made up as a preparation for the announcement of the "takings." Stallholders bring their monies and report their "drawings," and retire only to return at frequent intervals to report further "drawings," and deposit further amounts. The poor treasurer has to recast his totals with such frequency, and to score out his earlier findings so often, that his account sheet shows signs of as many erasures and "scorings out" as it does of final figures. The process of "recasting" registers quite a healthy condition of enthusiasm and interest in the venture, but it is disconcerting and trying to the patience. In much the same way have we been required to re-formulate our knowledge, erasing not a few of our previous findings in the interests of a fuller statement.

And this process too is not unhealthy. The forces of the Gentiles are to "bring gold and incense" and "show forth the praises of the Lord." God has been making it impossible for us to rest in anything less than a dynamic conception of our faith. "Thought is but a relating function and not a realizing one. It relates one idea to another, one object to another. It is in feeling and willing that we come to realization." Religion, we see, has primarily a dynamic quality and a feeling-meaning, and formulation must ever be the junior partner to fact and experience.

But alongside this swift movement in the region of growing knowledge there has been an equally swift and bewildering movement within the range of social life, and the lamentable absence of a creative faith has made us unable to turn the change to our account. It is not however too late. As Napoleon once said after the day had gone against him, and the afternoon was wearing on: "There is time to win the battle before sundown."

A particular feature of the situation is that so many things have loosened together. Easements in the material order of life have been accompanied by the slackening of restraints in the moral realm. Men have had the feeling of being free in all directions. The old sanctions have been questioned —being cited to appear for new judgment in a court where their claims might be considered afresh.

Swift change has fostered the illusion that everything has changed, even in respect of the moral and spiritual basis of life. Had Spiritual Reality and Creative Experience sounded out their true dominants and exerted their dynamic it would have been more evident than it is that the general upheaval is but part of the witness to "the things that cannot be shaken."

But we too have been sharing in the general feeling of "looseness." We have felt the "subsidence." We have felt it because we were not resting upon the ultimate foundation of the truth of our faith. We are told that Durham Cathedral has shown evidence of subsidence. It

is found that it has not been resting on the solid rock but upon a shelf of shale above the solid rock. And our Christian faith has shown subsidence for the same reason ; it has rested on its formulations rather than upon its Creative Life. The provisional is yielding under stress everywhere to the final. The final must utter itself. The infallibilities are gone ; all our knowledge is relative, but ultimate spiritual reality has disclosed itself in Christ and can mediate itself in the redeemed consciousness. Ours it is to " send out its vibrations " into the life of our time, allowing the Creative Life to inspire its own awe and manifest its true authority.

Looseness inevitably leads to bondage and to " the bitter cry." We come at length to what Wordsworth calls the " weight of chance desires." Men can never " close their account with spiritual reality." We cannot make this world mean what we like. God's meaning is writ deeply in it. It has a statutory and structural principle which can never be eliminated however long it may be evaded—and it can never be evaded without " hurt."

The manifestation and mediation of Spiritual Reality always speeds up the process by which men come to a knowledge of themselves and of the situation, as it presents itself in the last analysis, namely : that " every man must give account of himself to God "—that " we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," for He is the Ultimate Personal Principle.

Life has become industrialized, and with its

industrialization we have fallen largely under the power of the "machine." There seems, as things work out, less and less place for individual skill and the healthy reaction of craftsmanship. We hardly realize how difficult it is for a man under the standardized conditions of industry to feel himself a centre of energy. There is no possibility of return to the life in which 75 per cent. of our people dwelt in the country and only 25 per cent. in the town. The fact that the service of machinery has relieved us from two-thirds of the drudgery of daily labour must be appreciated, though its tendency to circumscribe the area of personal freedom must be suspiciously viewed, since "the machine was made for man, and not man for the machine." We must take to heart the finely-balanced word of the economist, Alfred Marshall, that "Religious faith is the greatest determining factor in the creation of character, and the second factor is the social and economic conditions under which a man undertakes his daily labour." Under conditions of our "machine age," personality is often cramped and tends to the search for "substitute satisfactions," whereby a freer and more adventurous life may be lived.

Our challenge is to fulfil a twofold function:

(1) To set the personality of man in the context of Christ's great thought about him—to bring in that free air by which his spirit may breathe amid its stifling social and industrial environment.

(2) To make that environment more amenable to the dominance of Creative Life, by ordering it

in the interests of the final values of a full personal life and happy fellowship.

To-day we are physically proximate but psychologically and spiritually apart. We need to think in "world terms" and in world-relationships—but the "world" is but a geographical expression. Just as we in terms of space are regarded physically as single-hearted but psychologically and spiritually are multiple-hearted, so the world is nominally one but actually multiple. And instability is the inevitable issue in each case. We must "unite" or suffer collapse in both realms.

Now the unifying principle in the world-order, as in personal life, is Christ. The alternative is always and everywhere "Christ or Chaos."

Christ has no rival in the field of the world to-day. He alone claims to be the unifying principle of fellowship in the complex life of a world become physically, industrially, and socially one.

The fall in the prestige of Reason and the establishment of the principle of the priority of the heart has its word of warning to offer us here. Rationalization, even if it could achieve its aims, does not go deep enough, nor extend its control far enough to supply a unifying principle in the life of a world possessed by a great instinctive urge and essentially dynamic. In Christ the "universal" is as deep sounding as the "ultimate." "In Him there is neither Greek nor Jew"—racial distinctions are transcended; neither "circumcision nor uncircumcision"—religious differences are surpassed; neither "Barbarian nor Scythian"—cultural divi-

sions are surmounted; "neither bond nor free"—social separations are bridged.

The time has long since passed when we could live self-contained lives. We must live to-day in a most complex situation of highly organized social relationships. So long as we did not touch one another very closely the Gospel might be interpreted in narrowly private terms, and social duty regarded as a kind of appendix. The situation, and a truer knowledge of our Gospel, has shown us that salvation is not private but fully personal, and as personality is fertilized in the social life salvation must be seen as social too. Personality does not develop in a vacuum, but in the interplay of a life which is always making the outer inner and the inner outer, and moulding and being moulded by the social life in which it has its setting. Personal life registers its values in the institutions of the social life and is in turn and by repercussion being influenced by the order of the social life it frames. In the narrower field in which our fathers worked the failure to give a fuller social and institutional expression to their Gospel did not wound their conscience greatly. But it greatly wounds ours.

The Spirit of God has developed in us a new social conscience. We see now how false it is to think of society as just a multiple of individuals. The idea of community is normative—there could be no personality if society did not exist. Society is an organism and not a social contract; and the condition of effective action, as of a full personality,

is co-operation. Nothing is ours while it remains ours alone. In the instinctive urge, which is the foundation of our personality, the life of the race dynamically surges and its true nature can only be realized in a full communal life.

Just as we have to hold together Faith and Reason, so here we must hold together the personal and social aspect of Salvation. We cannot face the intelligence of our age unless we see that the first two are "pairs," and we cannot mould the moral and spiritual life of our age except as we see that the last two are pairs also. Any half-truth is always bound to exhibit dangerous tendencies. The great social values all radiate from individuals, and apart from the intrinsic value of individuals they would have no existence.

The Social Gospel when proclaimed alone misses the mark. Reform always falls short of regeneration. Social reconstruction begins in individual renewal. The Gospel message deals primarily with man's individual relationships with God, and that relationship is sacred and inviolable. "A man's personality is the focus of the world." The first half of the truth calls us to "shut the door." But there is another half of the truth that our fathers tended to miss, but which we shall miss to-day at our peril. It is in the Gospel; we have not had to introduce it there.

Jesus knew no "simple Gospel" that did not deal with men in all the relationships of life. His teaching of the Kingdom of God set the truth of the Gospel in the threefold relationship

of "God, my neighbours, and me." The personal centre was emphasized, but also the social sweep. Jesus made clear that any breach in our relationships with one another involved a breach in our relationship with God, that even His forgiveness was cancelled if we were unforgiving towards one another. Now that principle, by the very emergency of the hour, needs to be fully carried out. We cannot leave that aspect to take care of itself. We need to sensitize our conscience to social wrongs. We need to build our social institutions upon the fellowship basis of the Kingdom of God. Through the want of a dynamic social expression of our Gospel, industry tends to claim a kind of sovereignty of its own, and may largely cancel out the efforts we make to secure personal Christlikeness.

But what further thought shows us is that we are being greatly shaped by the whole order of life by which we are surrounded, and we dare not disregard its repercussion upon ourselves or upon others. The only power that enables a man to resist the pressure of the life about him is for him to claim his share in the life of God, and our stress must rest there as it has always done. But just because the order of life bears so un-Christianly upon men they are often indisposed to consider the claims of our Gospel on individual salvation, until a passion for the remedy of social wrongs is more sympathetically and practically expressed.

Our Lord's words express the pith of the matter: "This ought ye to have done, and not have left the other undone."

3. *The Church in the midst of the situation of change, takes stock of the new conditions and adapts herself to face her task.*

" We are set upon an engagement very difficult " ; the task will strain all our powers. We shall not succeed by " living on our wits." We need to seek the Creative Life, to set ourselves to know our new constituency, to make contact with it, and adjust ourselves to win its allegiance for our Lord.

" New occasions not only teach new duties, but require also mobility of enterprise," as Tom Sykes puts it. In Cricket the fixed stance is a serious handicap. Good footwork is the essential of success. Adjustments are however never easily made. There are always those " up in arms against change for any reason or for none." One glory of evangelical experience is that what is final in it is not fixed, but flexible as the personal life that moves within it. The attempt to keep it fixed is fatal and a waste of our endeavours. We must rather devote ourselves to keeping it vital.

Mr. Chesterton says: " It was a mark of Victorianism that even its accidentals looked eternal." Much of our past action seems to have proceeded upon the same assumptions. Times of transition are eminently times for experiment. Greater elasticity is demanded. If inertia associates itself with parity, ineffectiveness is the invariable accompaniment of fixity. Battles have been lost, as was Hastings, through lack of adjustment to a different method of attack. As Dr. Hutton has

said: "It is no part of the Church's obligation to alter her voice at the bidding of the world, but it is her duty to pay heed to any sign of growth or change."

When the Mediterranean Sea ceased to be the centre of the world owing to the discovery of America, Venice had not the necessary vitality to build a new type of ocean-going ship, and train a new type of ocean-going seaman. She failed to make adjustment to the expanding world and so forfeited her supremacy.

A rich dynamic life is always the essential condition for adaptation. Emotion has plasticity as an integral part of its life.

The complaint is made that the Church is out of touch with life as men live it, with thought as men think it, and with progress as men desire it.

Like all broad statements it is only partially true, but there is enough truth in it to give it no little "sting." The Church can never be really relevant to the situation in any age save as she is living happily in the life of her Lord. Then she gets alongside the life and thought and movement of her time, and by making her impact Christlike, she both inspires life and thought and movement, and corrects them too. We are called always to seek the contacts of life, to use the terms of life, and to live our life among men.

Lawrence of Arabia paid the striking tribute to Doughty that in his Christian patience, generosity and pitifulness, living as a nomad among the nomads

of the Arabian Desert, he "broke a road for his religion" as he served the footsteps of his fellows and of his God.

By finding new contacts with our constituency, we need to create a field for the exercise of evangelism. The situation meanwhile is as Dean Inge puts it: that "Too many gardeners are in the hothouse," or, to change the figure: "The leaven is in one vessel and the meal in another." We are not in touch with our constituency. "The people have a quarrel with us which is not the same as their estrangement with God." If their "reproach" of us was "the reproach of the Gospel," then we could have borne it. But it is a reproach based upon the contrast between Christ's life and our own. Often the criticism is very indiscriminating, and the aversion is the result of a "complex." The sins of our unsympathetic rendering of our faith, of our authoritarian airs, of our identification of religion with our formulas, of our narrow spiritualism, of our unhuman outlook upon men, of our rigorous treatment of little children and young people—all these sins are being visited upon us in the "complexes" of aversion in the minds of men to-day. Some of the choicest souls, not out of perversion merely, but from a legitimate claim in the interests of life, have "held off from us," finding our forms too cramping for the full life they were determined to lead.

I do not suggest that this is the whole of the truth, but it is the side of it we in the Church must take account of first. Men hold off from

Christ and the Church for more reasons than these, not least because the truth as it is in Jesus hurts their pride, condemns their lusts, makes claims upon them they are not prepared to allow. But take a case like that of Richard Jefferies, who always turned his back on the Church and loved to look out on the sea because he was sure the horizon would not be disfigured by a steeple—that is surely one out of scores which might be instanced in which a "complex" was formed by having been thrown up against some unlovely and forbidding angle of religion in its institutions, or in its representatives, and not occasioned by religion itself.

They have "shied off" from the Church as a horse might do at a white post—magnified indeed out of all proportions, for such is the way "complex" works—but, nevertheless a reminiscence of some thwarting of a legitimate impulse, for which we must be prepared to take our share of blame.

Those who take no trouble to understand their charges, and who inflict punishment on them in the name of religion, have a good deal to answer for. Moberley Bell of *The Times*, as the result of his upbringing was never able to accept any form of Christianity. His guardian at Brixton always interpreted his falls and cuts and simple injuries as a child as "visitations of God."

Dr. Rattenbury very pertinently presents the situation in regard to our constituency when he remarks that: "The feeling of grievance is greater than the sense of sin. The opinions, sentiments, enthusiasms of the people have changed more in

the last two decades than in the sixteen which have immediately preceded them."

Rev. H. H. Farmer, M.A., in a recent article in *The Review of the Churches* on "The Task of Modern Evangelism," uses some very searching words in summing up the situation in respect of the constituency we are to win, and analyses the various groups which form it. He takes as his starting point some words of Otto's: "The evangelizing of a society which has become profoundly irreligious is to-day the first and greatest duty of a Christian fellowship." He then draws a distinction between the times gone by and the present in relation to the conditions under which the Church needs to fulfil her task. In bygone days the Church appealed to a society already deeply impregnated with its life and teaching. It had a platform of established authority and prestige from which to speak to an audience which, however it failed to respond, was always ready to be spoken to.

The position is different to-day. The greater mass of the people are neither interested in the Church's activities nor willing to give the Church the opportunity to be interested in theirs. Society has become profoundly irreligious, and no task of the Church can compare in urgency and seriousness with the task of facing and adjusting itself to this situation.

1. Enquiry is needed into the causes which have brought about this impasse, and what is sustaining this irreligion in the masses.

2. What the evangel is that is needed, and :

3. What methods of conveying the message are most suitable to the situation.

The Church must know its constituency, its message and its methods.

Mr. Farmer's grouping of the constituency is along this line.

1. There are first those otherwise interested, to whom religion seems irrelevant, life being so full and absorbing, more so than ever. With these *Religion is simply crowded out.* They are not definitely hostile. They read the religious articles in the newspapers and are delighted with the "whiff" of religion which the B.B.C. provides. A really big event like a birth or a death rallies their interest temporarily. But religion has a poor chance generally in the field of their attention.

2. Then there are those who have a more or less conscious religious outlook, but they think it is not the kind the Church will tolerate in their midst. There is a great deal of this extra-ecclesiastical or anti-ecclesiastical religion about the world. It is often very intelligent and thoughtful though it runs at times to the crankiness of Theosophy, New Thought, Spiritualism and like things. But there is *pronounced aloofness*, and creed and dogma and institutional forms share the blame. Often there is real ignorance of the attitude and atmosphere of Church Fellowship. They think it means subscribing to the literary inerrancy of the Bible and things like that. This group is definitely and vocally critical.

3. Then there are those who on the grounds of

up-to-date Science and Philosophy definitely reject the religious view and take up an agnostic position. They feel that modern knowledge has left the intelligent man no sure basis for religious conviction. This represents secularism on its thoughtful and vocal side. These last two groups should be thought of together. They are small numerically, but the views they express are constantly percolating downwards into the masses, through newspapers, novels, and the like, and are generally creating the impression that Churches are out-of date institutions.

4. The isolation of the working classes is to some extent due to a political creed which represents the Church as a middle class institution and "not for the likes of us." The accusations may not be true but they are made and believed. And there is a genuine idealism and keenness on higher things which is critical of and running past the Church, and being poured into political channels.

We may take that as a fairly accurate analysis of the situation as it presents itself in the constituency outside the Church.

Dr. Peake, in the address he delivered through the country during his Presidency of the Free Church Council, mentioned some of the features as they presented themselves to him as he looked upon the Church's life of to-day. We have, for example, a greater variety of types in our congregation than ever before. Some are wide, some are narrow, some are fervent, and some are Laodicean. We cannot count on our hearers' knowledge of the

Scriptures as we formerly could. This reacts very injuriously on our preaching. The power of attention is equally diminished in our hearers. We have to face far more, too, in the way of competition than before, owing to the strong appeals that are being made to our people through the life of the senses.

Then there is the passing of the clear-cut and sharply defined theology of past days. Salvation in earlier days was a clearly articulated system, and was expanded in terms of a plan. Generally speaking, fifty years ago theology was taken without question, and was decisively presented. Now, too often the forms in which New Testament truth is presented have grown strange to us though the truth itself is real. We must seek to give it the ring of assurance and the rapture of re-discovery once more.

Once again, the analysis of the situation—though not professing to be precise or comprehensive—is one that wins our acceptance as a description of truth. Other features may be named. Dr. Fosdick reminds us of the "breakdown of spiritual technique" within the Church. It answers largely to the breakdown of religious sanctions in the life without, and is but another indication of the general "loosening" of bonds. With it there has been a general dissolution of religious fear. It is a gravely disturbing sign that so many have given up the habit of the "quiet few moments" of religious reflection and prayer. Roman Catholics maintain their spiritual technique very rigorously;

Christian Scientists practise theirs assiduously. It is at our peril that we lapse into neglect of ours.

"The cult of excitement," too, as Dr. Lofthouse puts it, "has broken down our old-fashioned Sunday, the old habit of Bible reading, and with them a hundred other conventions of social life." Those who care supremely for the future will do well to maintain their strictness with themselves and not tear up the spiritual fibres by which personality has grown and thrived.

In transplanting we can never afford to leave the roots bare. The strain of change is great enough, as it is, without gratuitously inviting death.

"During the general upheaval of change certain crevices which before had become evident now assume the appearance of chasms. There is the chasm between the life of the people and the life of the Church, between the thought forms of the age and the thought forms of religion, between the ideals cherished by industry and the ideals hallowed in the standards of the Kingdom of God, between the life of age and the life of youth, between the devotional life of the saints and the thoughts of the scholars."

The creation of a new life of fellowship in which such differences shall be bridged is the urgent need. We get to-day, as never before, the clash of the generations, and we are constantly getting flashes of the combat. One of the great perils of rapid change is that we so soon lose touch with each

other. There has been to-day a greater break with the past than has ever been obvious before: there is a gulf between the fervent evangelism of the fathers and the rather cold ethical pose of their children. Change has affected all but in different ways and in different degrees. There is always a difference in the standpoint of one generation as against that of its successor, and there is ever the need that "the hearts of the fathers should be turned towards the children, and the hearts of the children turned towards the fathers" to escape a curse. Often youth is very trying and age is resentful. Scott says he was tempted to be angry with those who supposed that their "green conceptions could instruct his grey hairs."

Sometimes the incompatibility that is felt is more separating than an open quarrel. It is very hard for older people to fit into new ways, and to get accustomed to the new language in which truth is expressed. "To fit into a changing situation is like trying to put a new spoke into a revolving wheel." On the one hand there is wide forgetfulness of the virtue and duty of gratitude to the past. "Our young people have no background," says A. S. M. Hutchinson. He tells of a school in which the motto was "No traditions—Precedents." It must not however be forgotten that "the younger generation did not make the air they breathe, they found it," A word, however, of Dean Inge's in relation to our love of our country is worth pondering: "Only those can care intelligently about the future to whom the past is dear." And Bacon

has a great saying: "Take your stand upon the paths of antiquity" (but the sentence does not end there) "in order to see clearly in what direction you shall make your progress."

It is in the providence of God that by the breath of the Spirit, "the old men shall dream dreams" and that their contribution shall be "reminiscences of the way things have gone." By the same breath of the Spirit "your young men shall see visions," and lean towards change in outlook and adventure. A fresh Creative Experience enjoyed by both can alone bridge the gulf.

George Fox's experience will be remembered: "It was needful that I should have a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all conditions." As an illustration of his principle it might be told how once he was travelling through a certain valley when he came upon a man who offered him a pipe of tobacco. "I did not smoke," he said, "but I took a whiff to show that I was at home in the world." "Jesus knew how to be at home with sinners without condoning sin. He offered His friendship as untainted by compromise as by condescension." No man ever felt "choked off" by Jesus, as outsiders may often feel to-day by their evangelical friends. It is no wonder men begin to build barricades around themselves if they find such a spirit in us.

Identification is the master principle of Christianity. It can be represented in three ideas: God in Christ for us; we in Christ for God; we in others for Christ. We must discover common ground,

and we must go by unscheduled routes to find it. We must meet on the level of a real friendship, loving men not merely "saving our souls on them," as it has been called. We must give them nothing less than our full personal love. And as an inevitable result we shall create impulses in men's hearts and minds that will break any "complex" they have regarding us.

There is no doubt that the attitude of those outside towards us is: "Show yourself to be Christian in action and we will talk to you." In their hearts they pine for our understanding sympathy, they feel beset and hard-driven. No substitute action on our part will meet the need. "Their heart is just the shape of Christ's," and they do not realize that it is Him they need. "We are not to make raids on the world," says Prof. J. A. Findlay, "from the shelter of the Church, standing in the porch and compelling them to come in by advertisement. We must risk our precarious purity in their rescue."

The spirit of our approach must be non-prescriptive, fully personal, and sweetly persuasive. Our evangelism must be pervasive rather than obtrusive. We have to "win our right" to speak to them by the approach of an unsimulated love and sympathy. Our love must have "no imported air." Our authority must be inherent, not imposed, and there must be no undue attempt to influence. A. C. Benson tells us that "his father's influence upon him partly defeated itself, so purposefully was it exerted." When such purposefulness is

exhibited the fully personal character of the relationship is sacrificed; for the person being influenced is treated as a means rather than as an end. We must act largely by suggestion, by insinuating sympathy and love. We must present the truth so as to do homage to the personality of man. In respect of young people particularly Edward Thring's word, begotten out of his own painful experience as a boy, is worth remembering. He says: "Nothing is more fatal in a school than obtrusive religion."

By moving towards people with sympathetic emotion we become, all unknown to them, their guide. We start impulses at work within them which make them a party in the liberation of their own bonds.

It is always difficult to put ourselves in the position of the uninitiated whose ear will not tell them our story. The principle of education is that we must always commence on the level of the pupil, and we must always stand with him when we point out the way. The use of pious, approved language is perhaps the worst possible method of approach where outsiders are concerned. We must use the language of life. Ordinary people are impatient of what is vague, subtle and technical. We may, indeed, and must, use technical terms amongst the "mature" for purposes of fine discrimination. Dr. Eric Waterhouse puts the same point in this way. It is a great convenience in the laboratory for the chemist who is dealing with salts of different kinds to ask his assistant for the

sodium chloride, but at his own table he asks his wife to "pass the salt."

The supreme requirement is that words, vivid and vital, should have the glow of the heart in them. Sometimes words may not be necessary. Sympathy, love, and action bear their own signs and carry their own meanings. Lindsay Dewar tells of one day waiting in a baker's shop in the North of France when a British Tommy entered. He went straight to the window, helped himself to a loaf, took it to the counter, put down his money and went off without having uttered a syllable. He thus circumvented the tiresome question of language.

We sometimes would save ourselves much embarrassment if we could get at things as directly as that without the mediation of speech. It is nevertheless true that speech is the second and never the first requirement for our evangelizing task. We must rest our faith primarily on the potency of attitude, the pervasiveness of atmosphere, and the eloquence of action.

T. E. Brown, the Manx Poet, tells of meeting a little lad in a Derbyshire vale and asking him the name of a certain hill, and pointing to it. "Top o'th hill," was the prompt reply. "But hasn't it a name?" asked the poet. The boy shook his head. "What did your father call it? Has it not some other name as well?" But it was no use trying; all he got was, "It's top o'th hill." The poet wove his little rhyme about the incident: on the limit and yet the sufficiency of our knowledge and our language.

And Oh, the weary knowledge,
  And Oh, the hearts that fill,
And Oh, the blessed limit,
  Top o'th hill, top o'th hill.

The task before us is urgent and brooks no delay. We must make a new alignment of all our forces, stand in closer formation and on a shortened line for the new advance. The older ideal of unity is not possible to us. It was " unity by unchangeable institutions and unchallengeable beliefs." The new line must be " Fellowship with God in Christ in a new Creative Experience of Life and Love." Rev. H. H. Farmer speaks a needed word in his remark that " One of the great weaknesses of the old evangelism was the almost total absence of the note of ' fellowship in adventure.' We must make a loyal experimental test together of Jesus in human life. The old evangelism was " too narrowly based and too propositionally stated." But whether we can agree on the formulation or not we must get together, and we must evangelize if this generation is not to go down into the darkness of death. We can face the same direction and go the same way even if we stand at opposite sides of the road. But there ought not to be any real difficulty in bringing into focus the great positives of our Gospel.

It can only be our want of Christian magnanimity that keeps us apart. What unites us is the deep soundings of Reality in our common experience of fellowship with Christ.

Horace Bushnell and Charles G. Finney were men of very different moulds of mind and outlook

of life. But both were deeply experienced in the truth as it is in Jesus. Bushnell tells us how greatly drawn he was to Finney despite their great dissimilarity of tastes and methods of the soul. "I find God in Him," he said, "and consciously receive nothing but God and genuine impressions from him."

We need men of the right wing, men of the left, and men of the centre if we are to accomplish our task. Dr. Hutton suggests a very sound principle which ought to help us in making this new alignment: "Anything which can fairly and honestly be disputed is not of the essence of saving faith."

Sir William Osler, the great Medical Professor, used to keep three piles of papers which he named "*Certain*," "*Doubtful*," "*Mistaken*," in respect of the cases he diagnosed and treated.

Could we not come to such a judgment in respect of our views of Christian truth? "We must seek to know the points where judgment needs to be suspended, and speak with discriminating deference on such matters—while not allowing the tone of deference to creep in at the wrong place when making a challenge to the hearts of our fellows." We have always to beware of calling "basic" anything which is merely a formulation. Serious disunity is occasioned, and the Spirit of God grieved, when we speak indiscriminatingly about what is indispensable. Dr. Guiness Rogers spoke of the peril of a chain of orthodoxy in which whatever link you struck, be it the tenth or ten-thousandth, you alike break the chain.

A fear is sometimes expressed lest by accommodation we should give away a position we have set ourselves strenuously to hold. A word of Boyd Carpenter's is very pertinent in respect of that. He says: "Accommodation is not always falling between two stools. Often it is the fixing of an axle between two wheels."

Such it would be if, seeking a new baptism of Creative Life, we made a concerted effort to frame a few great positives, and so sought effectiveness by co-efficiency. We can surely seek to keep to the deep channels; preach the big issues; sound out the great positives.

Given the Creative Experience and the Evangelical Passion we ought to allow a place for the more direct and the less direct methods of Evangelism. We must seek contact first and find the ignition point. We must get the necessary range. I am no believer in the inevitableness of gradualness where conversion is in question, but I plead for the longer as well as the shorter approach to the great task, believing that the situation requires it. We need, in order to fulfil the first dictate of Christian insight, to begin with people where they are and prepare the way for them to Christ. The longer approach is no evasion of the evangelical task, for the contact sustained will be breaking up prejudice and creating impulse that will eventually lead them to Christ.

Two things wound very deeply. One is the implication of disloyalty to the Gospel which is assumed when one does not mention some of the old terms—as, e.g., "the finished work of Christ."

If such phrases are not used it is not that the great truths they contain are denied, but only that at the moment it does not seem the true and proper way of saying a right thing. Another is the assumption that one's passion to win men for Christ is less real because the longer rather than the shorter way is taken. The more indirect way is sometimes the best—granted always that a true mediation is made of the Gospel in all our contacts.

"We must believe so profoundly in the guidance of the Holy Spirit," says a good friend of mine, "as to be prepared to trust that leading even to the point of revising the methods of our spiritual fathers and adopting new ones."

At this juncture particularly we must take on a wider work in order more effectively to fulfil the narrower.

In the process of rolling out metal sheets, we are told, it sometimes happens that, owing to some trick of temperature or fault of material, a bulge will make its appearance on the surface of the sheet. The inexperienced might hammer on the bulge, but that would crack the sheet. What is done is to hammer all round it, beginning as far off as possible and gradually drawing nearer to the offending spot. Meanwhile the bulge, which they are careful not to touch, slowly diminishes and finally disappears.

In the next chapter we shall indicate two or three indirect avenues of approach to our task of evangelism, coming later to the more direct.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### The Indirect Approach to Evangelism by the Interpretative and Apologetic Way.

#### 1. *The Principle upon which we proceed.*

FROM a consideration of the personal character of our Gospel and the constituency outside the Churches to which we are to make our appeal, it becomes very evident what those principles are upon which we are to proceed.

Only by means of a warm and living contact can we break down indifference and dissolve prejudice. We have let ourselves grow away from living contact with the minds and hearts of the people, and we must find that contact again. "We need to keep great issues alive and prevent men from coming to easy terms with themselves. We must take account of the evasions, subterfuges, and confusions of men's minds by which they are screening their resistance to truth and the restlessness of their hearts."

As Prof. Rogers points out: "People's present contacts tend to confirm their prejudices and help

to fix their complex." There is no direct impact of spiritual reality to raise doubts in their minds as to the adequacy of the grounds upon which they are rejecting the Christian faith.

It is not suggested that any arguments that may be advanced will dispel the illusions which are existing, but it is strongly pressed that the evidence of Christian "personality in action" will be the most potent influence for ending indifference and breaking up the complex that obtains.

"We are being criticized most severely from the half Christianized groups which stand outside that have nominally accepted the Christian ideal, but who have never seriously set themselves to realize it; just as the forces attacking Rome were nearly all half Romanized before engaging on their work of conquest, and came with weapons the Romans had taught them to make and strategisms learnt from Rome."

The salient feature in the situation is that Evangelism has to proceed with its work in a questioning world. And, as it often needs to be pointed out, when questions are once raised there is no option but to proceed to answer them. Things cannot be again as if the questions had not been put. Reason once called into play cannot be ignored. It can never admit any authority but its own on its own ground.

Often of course unwillingness to face Spiritual Reality and the demands of conscience lies behind the questioning temper, and finds cover for itself under the mask of the prevailing mood.

All unwillingness to face spiritual demand makes us liable to illusions, more or less, and tends to lead us to shift the ground of our hostility to something a little more flattering to our self-respect. Quite unconsciously we give the best look we can to what is often a bad case.

A doctor (Dr. Charles Drage) used to say: "In treating a woman patient I always allow for the reason she doesn't tell me."

Truth always comes in its first impact as something which "hurts," and its first effect is generally to provoke some hostility from us. The temptation which presents itself to us all is (as Dr. Hutton puts it) to "take the edge off the instruments of God." We evade the thrust of the world of truth and duty, and are inclined to raise questions as to its authority and source. "It is of course a bad sign when we raise the question of authority in order to reduce the force of something upon ourselves so as to delay our obedience."

"You know it's your duty," said Phillips Brooks once to a young lady. "Yes, I know; that is why it looks and sounds so fearfully unpleasant."

For this reason our approach as bearers of the truth must be full of warm emotional sympathy. We must counter-balance the wound of the truth by the tender feeling with which we speak it.

A certain poignancy of soul will be felt if it can only be realized how blindly the human heart gropes for its satisfactions—as much engaged in trying to find out *what* it wants as in trying to get it. And in its darkness it pushes away from

it all unwelcome ideas, little knowing that the force it needs to exert to dispel the truth is the surest evidence of the truth's urgency and ultimacy.

A principle always honoured in present-day education is that we are to be first concerned with the "educand" or pupil, rather than with the body of truth we are to transmit.

In business men are urged to get into the habit of thinking of the customer as much or more than the goods, and the slogan is: "A salesman is known by the customers he keeps."

Our whole approach must be determined by what are the living interests and burning questions in the mind of our audience. We often need to keep at the back of our minds the fact that people are affected with uneasiness of spirit, and are God haunted in their secret hours. We have to make our contact with them at a point where that particular situation is not in view. We cannot begin always where we would.

It is estimated that fifty years ago probably 75 per cent. of the people would accept unchallenged the main propositions of our Christian faith. Probably now we can only be certain of about 25 per cent allowing them to pass unquestioned. That fact must be borne clearly in mind as we proceed.

It is quite the literal truth to say that we have not made out the case for Christ to the men of our generation. We have indeed "done many things" to clarify our own minds about Christian truth, but we have never really set about making our age

listen to the case we have to present. Men have gone on their way and we have gone on ours, and we have lived in spheres that seldom touched.

The enquiry, made after the War, embodied in *The Army and Religion*, reveals how pitiably inadequate our work of Christian enlightenment had been. Crass ignorance prevailed of the very alphabet of religious truth, and only a few hazy impressions of what Christ and the Church stood for were found to be in general possession, and these were held in close conjunction with the gravest misapprehensions of the whole spirit and scope of the Christian message.

No quick skirmish will meet the need—a long campaign is necessary. Nor must advance be made on one line only, but a concerted movement along several routes. The impression we need to create is essentially cumulative. For every phase of life : individual, institutional and industrial, must make its contribution if Christ is to be irresistibly presented.

The task, by its sheer immensity, staggers us—so long as we are merely content to look at it. Our peril has been that as the movement needed is on so vast a front and is so long overdue, we make the discussions of its pros and cons and ways and means a cover for "splendid inactivity." Whereas, by the very nature of the case we can only "learn as and when we go." We can discuss many of the ways and means best *en route*. Movement will dissolve many a fancy and dispel many a hoary fiction. We shall best discover our aptitudes

when we are in the thick of the attack, though of course the more careful our thought in preparation for the adventure the more effective it is likely to be. There is room for wide difference of view—seeing there are many ways of going forward and only one of standing still—but the only differences which have earned the right to serious consideration are between those who are grappling at first hand with the stupendous task.

What is desperately needed to-day is as reasoned and persuasive and passionate a presentation of Christ as the man in the street is getting of Socialism. A presentation that is not in any sense a counter-blast to Socialism, nor yet a mild form of the propaganda of it, but which will while recognizing sympathetically all that promotes good-will and fosters fellowship, and "rights the wrong" in any and every economic, does not identify itself specifically with any one of them—much less become contentious about the details which separate the parties of the State—but will seek to uncover the issue that lies beneath them all, the ultimate and personal issue of how a man is setting himself towards Christ and the truth for which Christ stands.

The presentation needed is that which is overflowing in its friendship, warm in its contacts, quick in its sympathies, "live" in its intelligence, and which tells men in language they can understand, in virile English and pithy phrase, what we stand for, why we exist, what we are after, and what we offer. A presentation, too, which is as

sane and often as severe as it is sympathetic, which cuts beneath the prejudices behind which men are excusing themselves from discipleship of Christ, which cuts away too the net-work of lies and the too easy simplifications of the issue, in which great numbers are finding an all-too-precarious cover. A presentation, the substance of which has been carefully studied and deeply experienced, which is nevertheless breezy and free, which glows with a romantic sense of God, and is brimming over with the victorious sense of life which our Easter faith brings. A presentation in fine which is shot through from first to last with the radiancy and glow of Christ's "All Hail!"

In this indirect form of approach, in which the ignition point of men's interest must be our first concern, we shall need to take a wide range—as wide indeed as the sweep of the Kingdom of God which takes in the whole circle of human relationships.

(1) An informal, happy-hearted and non-technical presentation of our Christian faith as it bears on life is the first requirement.

(2) Then a warm and sympathetic presentation of the great truth of Christ as it bears on Industrial and Social life must be given.

(3) Also we need to present an apologetic (hateful word) in which the reasons we give for our faith are set against the challenge flung down by non-Christian thought of our time.

All these three great tasks need not be undertaken in severe isolation; indeed, a happy combi-

nation of them is decidedly the best. Our apologetic must stress the creative and interpretative side of Christianity, and must glow with kindly social sympathies, or it will be utterly abortive. Christian Evidence Lectures get us nowhere and lead to useless scrapping and to "the glint of a blade" in the voice both of the speaker and the questioner. Besides ordinary people have not thought deeply about their religious doubts—they have taken them over at "second hand."

Expression is always a good safety valve whenever there is a real grievance or an imagined one. With people who have a "complex" the method is to let them have "their say out," to "talk it out."

It is always well to remember that men are often reacting in their utterances not to an immediate situation, but to one far back in their history in which some rising tide of their emotions had been thwarted, quite illegitimately may be, by some Christian individual or organization.

There are generally those, too, who have found religion, for one reason or another, unrewarding—a repression rather than a release—and their experience will probably reflect itself in something of bitterness of tone or unseemly frivolity of manner, since "the galled neck shies the yoke."

Fortunately the days of riotous, philosophic materialism are gone, so interchanges will not come so frequently on the subject of materialistic philosophy, but men will try to make capital out of Christianity very frequently, from the point of view of a materialistic economic.

It is of course a good rule not to treat people with any greater seriousness than they are disposed to treat themselves. A real humanness and a genial humour will save one from the pitfall into which we are told Archbishop Benson was wont to fall. He was disposed by too grave seriousness to meet a little heedless utterance of, say, his son Hugh, with a most weighty and solemn remonstrance, when what would have been quite sufficient was a half-humorous and sly rejoinder.

Dr. George Jackson gives an instance of a happy retort on these lines made by a minister in the open air. After finishing his address questions were invited, and some silly fellow in the crowd thought to turn his laugh against the speaker by asking: "What is the shape of the soul when it leaves the body at death?" Quick as a flash came the reply: "Oblong!" And so was the fool answered according to his folly. The shout of laughter that followed was not quite of the sort the questioner had reckoned on.

Seeing that evasion of the challenge of Christ in personal life invariably represents the crux of the situation, we must never fail to land on the moral and spiritual issue.

Indeed when we are living the life of intimate fellowship with Christ, and our intelligence is truly evangelized, all the contact we make will tend to precipitate that issue. And, as any truly Christian presentation of our subject proceeds, the conviction must be mediated that the only honourable conclusion of the whole matter lies, in the last analysis,

in a new personal obedience to the call of Christ.

Our Lord Himself never failed, whatever the enquiry was, to land on the moral and personal issue. And if we present rationally some question of interest it must always be made clear that in the final resort we have to act. "Talking round a thing" with moral import can only honourably conclude with "getting on with it."

If the point at issue is a question of belief the stress must finally fall upon some procedure of ours by which one's faith must be both tested and confirmed. "The Christian religion," as J. R. Illingworth said, "refuses to be proved first and practised afterwards; its practice and its proof go hand in hand."

Things insoluble in thought often become soluble in practice. Our beliefs, it must be pleaded, are never more than half-beliefs—perhaps, indeed, "make believes"—if we fail to proceed upon them.

A great part of the weakness of our efforts to Christianize our age has been due to the fact that we have not been intelligent enough when we have been evangelizing, and we have not been dominated by an evangelizing aim when we have been making our Christian interpretations or discoursing upon our Christian Ethic. The principle in horticulture, so phenomenally successful, known as cross fertilization, must be honoured in our work. It is the only principle which truly honours the unity of personality, the ultimacy of the evangelical experience, and the wholeness of the Christian message.

### 2. *Evangelism must operate through our Interpretation of the Christian Faith.*

We tend to end our logical processes in the region where they began. Often the goal of truth and our moral practice of it remain quite out of sight. The passion of Evangelism must needs inspire all Christian interpretations.

Thoroughly to evangelize our approach will prove a real safeguard against two perils. "Christianity is one of those high things which lose their meaning when over-defended and over-explained." We elaborate our explanations and defence when what the truth chiefly needs is to be mediated and manifested in order to carry its own meaning and produce its own convictions. Our words may intervene to prevent real contact being established between the individual conscience and the truth.

The task of Christian enlightenment must be tirelessly pursued. Mere exhortations will not do. Things must be explained, and false fundamental ideas and false moral values corrected—but we too often proceed cumbrously, and an evangelizing passion and aim does not give the necessary "drive" and directness to our interpretation.

Our preaching and teaching is too largely sterilized. It would probably surprise us if we made an examination of our ethical teaching to discover how suitably all we have said might have been delivered, without any essential alteration, before any Ethical Society in the country. The whole sense that Christ has given to Ethics a new

inwardness, extension, and dynamic; the whole sense that His Evangel is the true complement of His Ethic—the distinctive thing—is largely obscured.

One fears that what has been called "The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion," is due largely to our sub-Christian experience and presentations of it.

Not seldom, "the dragging of the heavy foot" in our Christian living to-day must be laid to that account. The call to "marshal the inherent forces of our nature"—or more colloquially to "pull ourselves together," "to play the game," "to toe the line"—is more frequently heard in our ethical teaching I fear than its complementary Christian fact that Christ has come alongside and is offering us His fellowship and life, and only conditions His gift of Himself upon our welcome and consent.

Again, if on the one hand we lay stress on the spiritual life as the necessary corollary of ethical righteousness, on the other hand we must emphasize the moral conditions which determine spiritual vision.

Dr. Maltby brings out the force of this contention very effectively in his book, *The Significance of Jesus;* and Dr. Eric Waterhouse supplies a useful introductory word; whilst Dr. Hutton, by the use of an admirable illustration of his on "The optic nerve," may help to clench the argument.

It is not unfrequently said that there seems to be no assured way of coming to knowledge in the

spiritual sphere. People say, you may believe but you can never know. The knowledge we have in the religious sphere is often compared unfavourably to that which is ours in mathematical science. For example: it is said that two and two make four. Why isn't religion as sure as that? Yes! but we are sure that two and two make four only when we keep the figures out of all relationship with concrete things. Two and two drops of water do not make four. Mathematical knowledge is only assured knowledge in so far as it is maintained as an abstraction. Knowledge of God in a mathematical kind of way is obviously impossible. But it may be asked: Is not sense experience much more real than experience of God? Fire burns; ice freezes. You can convince any objector by saying: "Put your hand into the fire and see." On the higher level however of the appreciation of beauty no such demonstration is possible. You cannot thrust your hand into a sunset to feel its beauty, and if any one says that a sunset is but a splotch of jumbled colour and that it has an unpleasant effect upon him, we cannot disprove his assertion. We can only tell him that his experience is quite abnormal and that his want of appreciation of beauty does not destroy for others the glorious effect.

This kind of certainty comes from insight. Now our experience of God rests upon that basis. Our sense of Him weaves itself into life and becomes part of our thought, of feeling, and will. Knowledge of God is not capable of rational demonstration, but results from moral insight.

But it might be objected that this is a very large deduction to make from a very delicate sensibility. This however is no disparagement of its authority, validity or permanency. Its delicacy has nothing against it. Why, our sole authority for the existence of the outer world in vision rests on the report conveyed to us by the optic nerve. Our faculty for guiding ourselves, or of following directions given to us, rests on a web of tissue across the eye which is called the optic nerve, and which is more delicate than a thread. The optic nerve is not to be estimated by its bulk or its solidity. The whole world, as a visual experience, rests upon the authority of so fragile a thing as that, and a man looks out upon the world and knows that he is not deceived by what he sees simply through the mediation of these delicate fibres.

Now what corresponds to the optic nerve in spiritual experience is our moral consciousness and our moral condition. It is quite possible for a man to be entirely devoid of a fine sense of honour simply through having fostered a self-regarding habit of life. The blindness which is induced by all deliberate injury to our moral honour, and which thickens its film as the habit grows, is one of the most appalling expressions of the justice of God.

"Moral evil," says Dr. Martineau, "is the only thing in God's creation of which it is decreed that the more we are familiar with it the less we know it. The mind that is rich in holiness and the humanities appreciates every temptation, computes

the force of every passion, and discerns the degradation of every vice with a precision and clearness unknown to the adept in wrong."

The point we must ever stress is that the conditions of clear spiritual vision are fulfilled in Jesus, and that through fellowship with Him and through the renovation of our moral life we are to come to the full assurance of God.

If moral conditions determine spiritual vision it is evident that we must abandon all claim to present Christ in terms of the demonstrations of logic. We can never give reasons which can compel personal assent by the very nature of the case. For faith then would lose its value as a test of man's spiritual condition. It would no longer be a response called forth by grace. If demonstration was forthcoming faith would not be free but necessitated. The truly personal character of the relationship would be lost. No! Faith is the consent of the soul "to drawings from above."

The spirit of the age leads many to take up the attitude that they are born to question everything. We must be careful to press the truth that the right to question always hinges on our willingness to receive and accept the plain facts that experience and observation bring.

As Dr. Glover points out: "Our complaint with questioning people is that they do not question quite enough; they do not question their axioms."

Life is not lived on the purely intellectual plane, for man achieves a greater part of his wisdom before the critical faculty arrives.

Mr. Clutton-Brock says that Mr. Bertrand Russell watches for the "will to believe" like a terrier at a rat hole. With him, all a man's mind except his reason is evil, or at least meaningless or absurd.

Thus we should succeed in showing on the best grounds of experience that this is an inversion of the true order of life, and psychology with its truth of the dynamic basis of personality should help us to press our conclusion.

In every issue we consider in this our interpretative work, our aim must be to leave the soul standing in the presence of Christ, confronting His offer and His claim.

3. *Evangelism through the medium of Apologetic.*

One of the synoptists, referring to the trend of the multitude towards Jesus during His Galilean ministry, says: "They came to Him from every quarter." From every point of the compass they could be seen winding their way over the hills and across the vales to His side.

It is our faith, begotten in the intimacies of fellowship, and supported by all we find in Scripture and know of history, that Jesus is "ultimate" and "universal," is the centre of gravity towards which all things and all the thoughts of men must tend.

Nature in its striving, conscience in its promptings, affection in its yearnings, reason in its discoursings, are destined finally by a longer or a shorter road to arrive in Him.

Necessarily then—as always with a universal—our task is not to explain it, but to see in it the explanation of all. When called upon to give an explanation of Him the claim we make is that every explanation of any fact in nature, or conscience, or intelligence, or affection, involves the bringing into reference of further unexplained facts and the clue to all if pursued to the end, requires Jesus the truth as its true ground and sure crown. And as His challenge in the soul is loyally answered, and His offer of fellowship accepted, the inward conviction of this fact becomes unmistakable. All roads lead to Him.

The knowledge of how He mediates the assurance of His presence to the heart can neither be transferred nor explained.

> Not on the road His wheels,
> Nor on the sea His sails.

But He comes where He is welcomed. He meets and fits into the complexities of history, as He also fits into the intricacies of the human heart, as no other does.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton puts it: "A stone may fit a hollow and a stick may fill a hole, by accident, but when a key fits into a complicated lock you know that there is no mere chance there."

And Jesus, as no other does, fits into all the complexities of human experience and need.

In the realm of mind and its interpretations of nature and life, many things puzzle. The meaning of life and experience is difficult to find. It is as

if one was presented with a puzzle of a garden with labyrinthine mazes and winding ways, and one was called upon to find the gardener. Time and time again we sit close to the puzzle looking for that face. And then one day, taking up the puzzle and holding it more distantly, we see the figure of the Gardener in it; all the paths are the sweep of His robe, and in the rose plot and fringed pool we get the gleam of His eyes, in the rockeries His extending arms.

And we marvel at our previous blindness. We had looked at particular features. We had read the puzzle in its fractional parts, but now, in the clear vision of a moment, "It was He"—the Gardener in all the garden—"Christ, all in all."

The claim we make then is that there is no repose for anything in this universe till it finds the ground of its existence in Him. Our Evangelical experience is the true clue and corroboration of this fact. The soul of man never rests till it can sing of Him:

> Now I have found the ground wherein
> Sure my soul's anchor may remain.

The discovery of this truth in the soul of man brings into true focus and perspective the whole order of the universe and of life.

God is in all, but not equally in all. We can be more in our children than we can in our workmanship. We get the footsteps of His goings in nature, but get no tokens of His likeness there. We

see the sweep of His robe but cannot draw ourselves up to see His face. The soul in its leap of faith comes to its great secret in "the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and in that light it sees light. It then goes back to trace by the steps of a formulating reason the approach to God by the longer route.

Nature needs mind to interpret its facts; but intelligence also recognizes its limits; it has no true measure of value in the universe; but conscience comes and with it the sense of accountability. Then the Someone who was discerned in nature and in mind is now discovered in a new way through the moral sense as the invisible God whose law is righteousness.

Man knows, when he is honest with himself, that in conscience he is sensing the ultimate fact. Man, unlike the animal, has more than one environment—he has two—and in the presence of the invisible Lord man comes to a sense of sin. This sense of sin is intensified through the fact of Christ. And this consciousness of sin forms the new highway to the truth of God as it is in Jesus and in His Cross. Through Christ's forgiveness and His fellowship he comes into the realization of sonship in his redeemed consciousness, and now rapturously worships the God he has found.

The range of Apologetic needed to meet the questionings of the age is exceedingly wide and cannot of course be discussed at any length here. It may however be possible to suggest a most fruitful line of treatment for Evangelistic purposes

if we bring a number of live issues into view under one heading, treating them from that point of view. We may call it, "Helping our fellows on to their conclusions."

It is one of our central conceptions that in the Christian consciousness of the Cross we have mediated to us what is essentially a foreshortening of history. The consciousness of sin is mediated to men through the deep soundings of the reality of love and judgment which echo in the dying of our Lord. God never says more than He does, and in the Cross we see no mere object-lesson, something educational or impressive, but God in travail, facing and fighting to the death human sin, by bearing in His own Spirit its judgment in identifying, sacrificing love. And that whole foreshortened issue of the Cross is mediated to us in the relationship of forgiveness and fellowship with Christ. And this consciousness, whenever real and vital, is creative of a new conscience in respect of sin in the human personalities with whom we come into contact.

Now something of the same foreshortening of processes may be possible on the level of the intelligence. Intellectual conviction may be induced by calling a man to proceed further, and visualize the true character of his end. With a kindly and tender hand we are to take men on through the history of their thinking to a goal they have failed to envisage. Men in the shortness of their vision are often prepared to go "dancing down their days" in happy unconcern, who would start back

if the conclusions of their own course could but be sympathetically presented to them.

Fallacies and sins alike wield their lure through the dimness and the haze which associate themselves with provisional thinking and short vision. A new wistfulness would soon begin to reveal itself if our mediation of ultimate facts was more impressive—that is, if we lived under their awe ourselves.

As is well known, one of the most powerful appeals of the *In Memoriam* is to be found in the fact that the poet has courage enough to proceed upon the assumption presented to him by a materialistic view of the universe with death as the end of all, and follow out its implications relentlessly until he "shuddered" in the cold world into which his disbelief had brought him, and so was led back again to faith once more at the call of the interest of life, protesting against the "freezing reason's colder part," crying: "I have felt."

Take this principle and apply it, say, to the claim that is made for an unfettered freedom. When Shelley ran away with Godwin's daughter to France the act caused Godwin deep distress; but, as Shelley pointed out, it was in accordance with the principles he had advocated. Now Shelley himself lived on the principle that "the spirit of man must be unbound." He misconstrued the true nature of freedom, regarding it negatively as release from the tyranny of institutions and conventions—a mistake many have made since then. He failed to see that freedom is not release from law, that the human soul can never remain unbound,

that its only true release is through the fulfilment of the higher law of our being.

We know how the claim to be "unbound" worked itself out with Shelley; we know how it worked itself out with the young adventurers in the 1890's; we know the way "looseness" ever works out in nausea; we know how "unbridled individualism" always proceeds through its stages of acceleration and riot to melancholy and the deeper darkness of death.

We can never live our life without high loyalties. Why, even in order to play a game we must honour rules. Then how could we bear to see our principles carried out by our children? Surely what occasions a shudder should cause us to retrace our steps. So then "to proceed further" is to come upon the dead end, and in the interests of life we must "right about face."

Or again, the art of leading men on to their conclusion, and then setting it grimly before them, may be followed in respect of the plea men make that they possess no real freedom. This plea is made very frequently nowadays with considerable vigour by those who hold a materialistic view in economics, and by those who have drawn false inferences from the new psychology.

A limerick, fairly well known, is characteristic of the plea that is made:

> There was a young man who said Ha-m!
> I suddenly see that I am
> A creature that moves
> In predestinate grooves,
> I'm not even a bus, I'm a tram.

Prof. John Adams gives an instance in his *Everybody's Psychology* of a young man who remarks to his friend: "I see old Thomson wanted to reinstate his nephew in his will but his 'unconscious' wouldn't let him." This region of the unconscious is viewed as tyrannizing and victimizing personality, and holding it in shackles.

There are two ways by which we might "proceed further" from this refusal to acknowledge freedom. The first is to accept the denial as possessing a real basis in truth. Men, naturally, find themselves unable to secure liberty of action. Only the grace of God enables us to achieve freedom. We only secure freedom as we draw upon the resources of grace in Jesus Christ.

Labour's right to transfer its service is within its possession. But actual freedom is restricted by the slender resources of maintenance possessed by the worker. The freedom is not a fiction but it remains unrealized through lack of resources.

Abstractly, in economics the employer and employee are free, but in actual practice the situation is not evenly balanced.

It is perfectly true that there is no real freedom in a life in which the resources of God in Christ are not drawn upon. A man who puts forward this plea generally expects it to be challenged, and it is something of a shock to him to find it accepted. It may arouse his sleeping conscience more readily to take him thus unawares. The higher life of spiritual freedom seems a long way off to him.

His natural reply to the call made to him to seek release from the "fell clutch of circumstance," through the power of grace, is rather like that made in a marginal note by the King of Prussia when his Ministers presented a memorandum to him, urging him to challenge Napoleon and rouse the country to fight him. He wrote at the side of the memorandum: "Very good as poetry."

Of course the other way of leading a man on to his conclusion is to visualize for him a world in which this view of non-accountability becomes the prevailing principle of action.

All true progress is made by the extension and intensification of the sense of accountability. To deny accountability is to cast away our crown and to take the level of the beasts that perish.

"Our response to external stimulus is not of the nature of a rebound but of the nature of a reply," as Prof. J. A. Thomson reminds us.

Dr. Fosdick uses an illustration which helps us to understand the situation which would be created if the claim of non-accountability became general.

So long as only a few are suspicious of the solvency of the banks and withdraw their savings no serious harm ensues. But let the mistrust become general and a very different situation is created. There is a run on the reserves of the bank, and a financial panic ensues which threatens the very fabric of the nation's life.

If a man avows scepticism he only wants to go as far as his whims lead him. Complete scepticism, as Dr. Fosdick puts it, is harder to reach than the

North Pole, and once you reach it living there is impossible.

Mr. Chesterton has his well-known account of his own experience of this principle of scepticism. He began, he says, by being a little heretic. He doubted everything until he was led at length—the bottom having dropped out of his world—to doubt his doubts, and so return to faith, he having gone all round the world to get next door.

Or if, as is very general to-day, a man pleads that he cannot really get himself to believe in the Personality of God, because it involves him in the action of using the mould of his own nature in which to conceive of the Deity. It may perhaps not have occurred to him—and he may very well be reminded of it—that we can never escape the structure of our own minds in any conceptions we frame and yet we do not deny the objective reality which frames itself, inadequately no doubt but vitally, within the ranges of our thought.

As Canon Streeter says: "To personify the power behind the universe is not a pathetic illusion it is a necessity of thought. What we recognize as the highest in ourselves must have a counterpart in the transcendental life of the universe." We must, by the conditions of our thought, think of the personality of God as we know personality in ourselves, but with a large plus. Facing the alternative we are left with "A Life" less vital than our own, and have violated the accepted principle of development that we shall interpret the lower by the higher and not the higher by the lower.

And the salient thing in man, who is the crown of Creation, must assuredly be the salient thing in the Infinite God. He surely is not less than His Creatures.

The universe in which the Personality of God is denied is topsy-turvy, and we have no valid ground for believing that we know it at all.

Without attempting to develop it, the same principle may be applied to the claim made by drawing a false inference from psychology that prayer is auto-suggestion, and that religious experience is purely subjective. The same argument, logically followed out, makes experience of any kind subjective too, and the psychologist finds the ground gone beneath his own feet.

The Apologetic presentation always needs the passion of evangelism to save it from futility. It only really lives as it becomes creative through the passion of a great love of men surging through it.

It has the great advantage of making a starting point where interest is "live." It also affords unique opportunity of contact, and where men are enraptured by the sense of God the influence is bound to tell evangelically.

I overheard a remark passed by a couple of workmen who were passing out from a large public works as a minister with happy face was speaking on these lines. The remark they uttered was in itself a fine witness to the Gospel. They said with a smile: "He's as gay as ever." If, as Mr. Chesterton puts it, we were "prancing with belief," more would be feeling the vibrations.

### 4. *Open-air Apologetic Evangelism.*

No opportunity affords itself at present to develop the topic of what one might call Economic Evangelism, or, to use a more comprehensive term, Evangelism on C.O.P.E.C. lines, which indeed is none other than the Evangelism with which Jesus commenced His ministry, the "preaching of the Kingdom of God."

The presentation of Gospel truth through the medium of the "live" interest now taken in Economic and Industrial questions is an even more promising field than that of Apologetic.

A great deal of educational work on "Kingdom of God" lines needs to be done in the homeland before we are likely to have the heart of the people with us once more.

The conviction requires to be created in the life of our time, and we cannot acquiesce in any view which would make religion just a department of life side by side with other activities. It is an attitude to life as a whole. The Christian view calls clamantly for presentation in all its range and realism and radiance.

We are seeing with greater clearness than ever before that, as life is one, we need to be moving in a great many directions at the same time. Our failure to take the Christian way of life in one of its phases is holding us up in every other by closing the ears of the people against us.

The social conscience which Christian influence has created is become our judge, and its judgment

has been delivered against us very largely. So that unless and until we show more passion in seeking to make communal life more honouring to the Lordship of Christ, and show a more determined purpose to embody His "Kingdom values" of the sacredness of personality, the truth of fellowship, the duty of service, the fact of universality, the approach and power of sacrifice, all set in the background of the Eternal Life as overflowing into the life of to-day—then we shall hardly be able to get our more personal Gospel listened to, much less believed and received.

For there is another Gospel in the field which claims to be more true to the compassion and sympathy of Jesus. It is a half Gospel, but it makes a powerful appeal, and it has its immediate offer of advantage. This Gospel has won the ear of our constituency with its slogan: "Keep your values as they are, but redistribute them."

The tables are turned and the voice of the people seems to take on the accents of the Word of God. They charge our sins upon us, and so stop our mouth as we would charge their sins upon them. "Is this what you call Lent?" they seem to say. "Why, on Fast days you find time for business, you go collecting debts. Fasting makes you fretful, quarrelsome, till you strike ungodly blows. Fasting like yours will never bear your prayers on high. Is not this the chosen Fast to loosen all that fetters men unfairly, and to relax its grip, to free poor debtors from their bonds and break what binds them? Is it not to share your food with hungry

men and take the homeless to your home, to clothe the naked when you see them, and never turn from any fellow creature ? "

" Then shall light dawn for you with healing for your wounds. You shall advance, your goodness in the van, and the Glory of the Lord as your rearguard. And the Lord will answer when you cry, saying : ' Here am I.' "

May it not be that until we begin to take the great Kingdom tasks on our heart more sensitively, the woes of men on our heart more sympathetically, that the old radiance will not come back to us, the people will not hear us, nor God Himself answer us when we cry ?

Where else can we find a place to make our voice heard save " in the streets," on these great issues ?

How shall they hear without a preacher who comes within their range ?

An Open Air Campaign is one way, and the speediest way at present, for coming into touch with the constituency whose verdict has gone against us but whose verdict we wish to reverse and win for Christ.

Is not separation our crowning sin ? We keep our distance. There is an insulating, non-conductive medium between us which must be broken down. And, on the one side the outsider hugs illusions about us, whilst on the other side we hug illusions about him. We have not succeeded as well as our fathers in keeping the common touch. We plead for a Campaign in the Open because it is the shortest road to contact. And the contact will

be as quickening for us as for the others. We shall gain new vitality by the touch of Mother Earth and by close contact with Our Father's other children. We should discover how deeply true those things are we had long recognized as true. We should appear less often amongst men as representing an apologetic attitude for our faith. We should comport ourselves not as those who had to say something, but as those who had something to say. Besides we should have more to say because we had more to show. Our presence would be as powerful a persuasive as our representation.

The next move rests with us. We can never save our fellows by dwelling in a world apart. There is no principle in religion which justifies any faith in action at a distance. We cannot act save where we are present or long to be present. And while we stand still in isolation, prejudice and misapprehension in those outside tend to deepen into permanent alienation and estrangement; and misunderstandings, by entrenching themselves, become perversities.

Experience of Open-air work for twenty years has convinced me that it is best undertaken at some central place where people normally gather. There the interchanges are characterized by an unbuttoned ease and by close, free, and hearty contacts. The man who has discovered his Master's secret of how to unbend finds the warm and jovial air of such a place not uncongenial for the presentation of a faith which always seeks and needs to cut new channels of relevancy for life. Street-

corner preaching, where one has to shout to gain a hearing, is well worth doing if nothing else is possible, but it is only a second best. There is not close enough contact, and you fail to get the kindling spark when your audience is not a congregation. And to touch people at the end of a shout is often as ineffective and unexhilarating as touching people at the end of a long pole.

There are at least two things you can hardly do save under conditions of warm contact, and the use of the softer tones of the voice—one is making love and the other is the persuasive and reasoned presentation of a great Gospel of compassion. Then, under such conditions of distance, only disjointed exhortation is possible, and that does not come any way towards meeting the real needs of the situation. I find too that one is very apt to scold when one has to shout. The uplifted voice in an unsympathetic air associates itself readily with a rising temper. And scolding is fatal.

For the full effectiveness of such a presentation one needs loyal co-operation and favouring external conditions, for in no class of work are these accompaniments so determinative. Group fellowship is the natural sustaining strength of this kind of task. Men need to stand together in mutual support and close formation, and though they may be non-speaking pipes of the organ of propaganda they will have their contribution to make in giving tone to the note of advocacy. Let such supporters crowd in close in front of the speaker. Let them look their part and provide in the intentness of their

interest the spring-board as their leader takes the plunge. To appear detached or distracted, to present a bored expression, takes the edge off the instruments of God. With a genuine sympathy and with upholding prayer they are to do the listening for others till the others arrive. The outsiders will gather behind an interested group much more readily than they will face one.

Singing has its value if it is of the best, but it is not essential. It may come in far more suitably and effectively at the end rather than at the beginning. The start is always the severest test and strain. The most experienced man finds his nerve troublesome as he essays to speak, and the best man may find himself a failure once in a while. Personally I still shrink from the opening interchanges after many years' practice, and it is only the urge of the Spirit and the sense of the necessity of the task that holds me to it. One feels as Dr. Samuel Johnson felt about a sea voyage. When asked if he would like to see Giants' Causeway, he replied: "Yes, sir, I should like to see it, but I should not like to go and see it." But if we desire the result we must undertake the risk, and "strive, never grudge the throe."

Our sense of the continent of Christian truth and our experiences of interchange with our fellows will suggest the lines of our approach and the substance of our message. The man in the street has often only the vaguest and most confused ideas of the Christian message, formed heterogeneously out of the dim memories of school days, the rumours of

the street, with little bits thrown in from shop talk. He is playing in the rough, and makes worse blunders than the most inexperienced golfers in hitting with the wrong club everything but the real thing. Our interpretation must clear the entangled undergrowths which surround the truth and help our fellows on to the fairway.

The Christ so many outsiders reject is Christ as He is misunderstood. Men have identified Christ with the most antiquated notions. Error has had a long innings and truth has a heavy score to overtop. Religion associates itself in men's minds with what is tame and timid and with things exhausted of life rather than with what is relevant to it. They incline to take hold of religion always by the wrong end—by the side of its restraints rather than by the side of its inspirations; by the side of its burdening duties rather than by the side of its promise of life—and as a result the Gospel is anything but glad tidings to them. They have swallowed undigested bits of science, and retail with utmost simplicity long-exploded ideas about the documents, the formulæ and the institutions of the Christian faith. They have so long accepted the counterfeit for the genuine without challenge that the whole currency of their ideas is often discovered to be debased. Often enough they misread the situation of our complex life and falsely simplify the issues, imagining that they are going to end the world's abuses by "simply blowing on their hands" or "by ending the rotten system."

Of course no one can ever generalize in respect

of a crowd. A river is never the same river and a crowd is never for long the same crowd. There are puzzle-headed men like Mark Sabre in it often, whose brows are wrinkled with troubled thought, saying: "What an odd thing life is. However can any one co-ordinate its parts? It seems as though some mysterious part is missing!" And ours it is to tell how what is odd becomes the even through the One: to tell of the One who is the key to life's cipher and the cue to its riddle. And there are always some who fall into the category of Nona—in the same book, *If Winter Comes*—who are ready to write their name against the word "Flotsam" in the Dictionary of Life, "Goods shipwrecked and found floating at sea." And all our interpretative Christianity must end with an evangelical note which will sound like a peal of glad bells to hopeless souls like Nona's, or like Janet's in *Janet's Repentance.*

The one thing about which we can safely generalize is that no member of the crowd can ever close his account with the nature of things—with God. "That indeed to be a human being at all is to have some share in God," and therefore open to aches of shame and pulses of nobleness which have their source in His Fountain Heart. We can be sure, too, that the old materialism as a scientific theory, alas, not as a matter of practice, is as extinct as the dodo. People cannot explain everything away as they tried to do thirty years ago, even wireless has helped us in that. No! It blows another wind, we breathe another air. And with that different

atmosphere Christianity has another accent. Besides "we have a Christian message that has grown on our hands."

We must take the tide when it serves us. We must let the pathos of the unsatisfied hearts of our fellows haunt us till we help them. They are "dropping buckets into empty wells and are growing old in drawing nothing up." They are, oh, so wistful, but unresolved. To fail to endeavour to meet the need will mean that "Your house will be left to you," as one reminded us lately. That is the penalty. The great waves of progress will roll over us and leave us stationary.

## CHAPTER IX.

### Making out the Case for Christ and Seeking to Win a Verdict for Him.

THERE is no chance of the Church surviving without the Creative Life and the Adventurous Spirit of Evangelism, nor is there any hope of saving the world except as we get to grips at once with our task, and proclaim our message with the glow of testimony in it. All great preaching has been experimental. Our present inertia and coldness is largely due to the absence of rapturous assurance, and the loss of the " crisis " and judgment sense which is implicit in all forgiveness and fellowship with Christ, which has the background of the Cross.

We have seen in Jesus that God is Love, but the qualitative character of that love is not evident. We have not seen what kind of love it is. In our experience of God's love we have " let slip a dimension." It seems as if with our naturalizing minds and impoverished experience we can hardly afford to even speak of God's love without setting a Cross behind it, and saying: " God's love is like

that "—a great love that comes to us bearing at its heart a grim and tragic judgment passed upon sin.

Sterility, it would seem, must ever mark the Gospel in which Love and Judgment do not act as fertilizing principles to each other.

I am not suggesting that any theory of the Atonement is specially in question, but I am persuaded that whenever these great truths become depolarized, deterioration sets in and the Gospel becomes non-magnetic.

The Gospel Fellowship has its great part to play in creating a constituency for itself. It mediates the conviction of sin, to which later its Gospel answers. We hear on every hand the plaint: "People are not asking in any large measure the questions the Gospel sets out to answer." That fact greatly burdens the preacher's soul. He is "bound" if the people "sit loose" to the sense of sin and feel no poignancy about it. Is it not possible that, searching for the cause of this, we are under the affliction of what Sir James Mackenzie calls "the curse of the false scent"? May not the fault lie nearer hand, in the heart indeed of Christian experience? "The darkest spot," says a Japanese proverb, "is just beneath the candle."

The question is a very piercing one, whether indeed we are not letting our sense of God's love lose its fertilizing principle of judgment in our experience, and as a result the tonal quality of the Gospel is failing to find utterance in our preaching and through the mediation of Church fellowship;

so that in part we ourselves may be responsible for the infrequency with which we have to answer the cries of poignant souls. It is a question worth our most prayerful thought.

Below the error of the Mass there lies this truth: that we need freshly to express the values and virtues of the Cross. But the fresh expression needed is not in spectacle but in experience. We can never preach the Cross if we have recovered from the wonder of it. When we take our pardon easily, Christian experience has lost "character," and the element which gives "tone" to the preaching, which else is but "sound." In every fresh experience of forgiveness, "In wonder lost, with trembling joy, we take the pardon of our God." And in every renewal of that forgiveness—as in all the preaching of it which rises to the level of mediation—we feel a new smart in our wound and the anguish of God's heart.

The Cross shuts us up to the mercy of God—makes beggars and bankrupts of us all. It leaves us with the sense that we must owe our salvation since we cannot earn it. And so it cuts out that self-sufficiency and complacency which is the deadliest thing in the religion of our age.

Dr. Whyte once, when referring to the Crown of Thorns upon the Saviour's brow, remarked with deep feeling: "I wonder in what sluggard's garden those thorns were grown."

We can never make out the case for Christ, or have the chance of doing our best work, until we get a new edge on our experience and witness.

"If the iron be blunt and he do not whet the edge, then must he put forth more strength, but wisdom is profitable to direct"—and the direction which wisdom gives in respect of our present bluntness is that we must seek together a new evangelical experience of creative force. "Each new generation must do its own seeking and finding. The fathers having found is only the children's warrant for the search."

If the outsider has not entered into judgment with himself—and he has not—he is not likely to do so until we show him the way. He will catch the new note, not through our denunciations, but through our penitence. He will feel that doomsday has come; that a new and sensitive sense of accountability has been created in his conscience, through our poignancy. It is poignancy—as mediated from the Gospel Fellowship, poignancy as mediated through the Gospel message—that breaks men down.

William Watson, the poet, tells of a man who left a smoky and dingy industrial centre to go for a week's holiday at the seaside. It was the only holiday he ever had. It passed all too quickly, and at the end of the week he returned to the old conditions with the same smoke and grime, and to all intents and purposes, outwardly, the same man; but from that day on he carried in his heart, says the poet, "The torture of the difference."

Dr. Rattenbury, in his essay in *Methodism and the Modern World*, writes very pertinently of the indispensable conditions to be fulfilled if we are

to serve the present situation as our fathers served theirs. He says no evangelistic campaign has ever been successful or is ever likely to be unless :

1. It declares a dogmatic message—a Gospel of genuine good news—or in a secondary degree a prophetic doom and judgment.

2. Unless it declares a Gospel as experienced and as witnessed by experients.

3. Unless it is declared by men who stake their lives and comfort on its truth.

4. Unless it is declared in thought-forms intelligible to the people.

These four facts are, he considers, unquestionable. Methodism in all its evangelical successes has never lacked them.

The first note, then, of any evangelical message must be a note of exultancy in the Gospel as good news. It must present itself not as a set of negatives nor indeed as a code of positive duties, for the Gospel is a dynamic force and a great positive. It must be preached "as good news, not good advice." It must have for its central theme a rapturous message about God. God has come over to our side and stands with us. He has got a foothold in our history and a witness in our hearts. He is such a God as sets us singing ; the truth of Him is such as takes the chill off a cold world ; takes the sting out of bad news and changes the balance of the whole human situation putting us on top.

God stands with us even as over against Himself in the person of His Son. Stands where the

shadows fall thickest and where death's deepest shadows—those of guilt—gather round about our heart. He offers us forgiveness at His own cost, and only asks that we should consent to receive it. The Cross of His Son is like a great plus, which pledges a renewal of the resources of our bankrupt life.

When Stanley discovered Livingstone in the dark continent, weak, dispirited, and feeling almost forsaken, the news Stanley brought that he was thought of and cared for by the people of the Homeland put new life into him. So this Gospel with its pledging of God's unfailing and tender remembrance of us sends new life coursing through our enfeebled veins.

When Montaigne was offered the Mayoralty of Bordeaux he accepted the Office but protested that he could only take its duties on his hands, but could not take them on his heart. But this Gospel of a Redeeming God shows Him as taking on His sensitive heart the whole human situation. Indeed, letting the great judgment of its sin beat out its echoes on the fleshly anvil of His heart.

From the point of view of our conception of God we have a Gospel richer in its colours than ever our fathers had. Often their hearts must have quailed with a paralysing fear as they presented Him as their formularies set Him forth.

We have come into the possession of a much wealthier thought of God. And yet we are not more exultant. The fact is we only know things by contrast. The background in which our fathers

set the truth of God's Grace was heavy and black with judgment and ominous with terror. And so in fact they did find more in the Gospel than do we. What is more, they preached their Evangelism with greater effect than we are managing to preach ours. We lack what Wellhausen called, in his word about Amos, "blood earnestness."

Hardly any question we could consider is more urgent than the enquiry as to what note it is which should take the place of that which so effectively held up the careless of, say, two generations ago. Something is necessary to "round up" the easy-going man of our age, and confront him with issues he can neither shelve nor shirk. Men do not turn a hair often when you preach to them that the judgment of sin is in the sin itself; that its reward is its consequences, for it is part of the issue of sin that it blunts the imagination to any form of spiritual consequence. Sin lands its victim into an unfeeling state. Somehow the terror men do not feel must be reflected in our preaching. The judgment of sin in the Cross is as necessary to our age as that aspect which has been more frequently stresssed—its revelation of a supreme love.

Spiritual Reality when it is manifested possesses in itself the accent of authority, and the note of urgency. When Spiritual Reality gets its mediation through not only the Evangelist but the Gospel Community it is a great discerner of the heart. It bears with it its own awe. The time has been, in years past, when the awe of God has rested

upon whole communities, and men spoke even on the streets in whispers. They felt the Reality of God impinging upon their souls.

The disclosure of Reality, we know, dispels many illusions. It sharpens the features of everything within its range, things stand out with a saliency previously undiscerned in the surrounding haze. Just as Thomas Hardy would say: "Cold weather brings out on to the face the written marks of the habits and vices of people, as warmth brings out on paper what is written in sympathetic ink. Under the snap of cold the quality of a handsome face is reduced to its lowest terms."

And Spiritual Reality brings with it that which makes the vision sharp and the issues clear and urgent. Authority sounds its clear accent, too, in Spiritual Reality. When the voice of Jesus calls we feel we dare not question His right to ask what He likes. The soul under the awe of His voice does not quibble or question, it recognizes "Right" there.

He puts, so to speak, the horn that hangs on the Castle gate to his lips and rouses the dwellers in Mansoul by the vibrancy of His blast. It is the way with all ultimate things to "hold up" the soul. We do not summon them, they summon us. We do not give them their power it is inherently theirs. There is something magisterial in the voice which leaves no room for hesitancy and debate. It always creates "*live issues.*" When Jesus speaks to the soul He awakens eternal echoes there. We may defy Him, which is what we mean

by death. We may lay down our life at His feet—which is what salvation means. But we cannot ignore Him. He comes as One knowing the very structure of the mind and heart.

They say that if you strike the right note in a building even the rafters will ring. Jesus knows the human soul from within, and He knows the tone which awakens the sleeping conscience. He is the true Lord of the Spiritual order, and He sounds the note that announces His sway. When the soul falls into a slack and consenting way and slumbers upon itself—He speaks, and sleep is lost until we honourably answer the call. There is no manœuvre of the human soul by which it can evade what is indeed inexorable. Great literature is full of the varied renderings of that truth.

The Bible expresses it more vividly than all. "It is as if a man did run from a bear and a lion did meet him, or as if he did rest his hand upon a wall and a serpent did bite him." Neither on the highway of life nor under the cover of one's roof is the spirit of man secure against the urgency and ultimacy of Spiritual Reality. There is no eluding the inexorable; the only safety is to fall into its arms and find its forgiving love. The only wisdom of man is (if we may represent it in the old Greek phrase): "Become what thou art."

No truth is so awakening to the conscience as the sense of what Jesus felt about the "loss" of the soul, and no case can be made out for Christ that omits that haunting background of His consciousness. It was not that Jesus put terror

on the world. He "sensed" this terror as always existing. He made it clear that His own coming created a "crisis," and that for some it had been better if they had never met Him since had they not known Him "they had not known sin."

At the moment, as Dr. Rattenbury remarks, it is unlikely that much approach can be made to heathen England by the preaching of a Judgment to come. A "Social Righteousness to come" shows the more likely way. We agree. There is, however, this note of the irreparable loss that ensues to a soul that turns down His offer of forgiveness and fellowship, which is such as should haunt the soul of man to-day as in ages past. It would if we were mediating the sense of it.

Jesus often threw out in figure the peril men ran. With the soul of a poet He symbolized what He felt. Picture words were the only things He could use, but they were symbols of a tremendous reality. He both felt, and mediated. He knew what man was meant to be. He knew what was in man. He knew the majestic thought God had in His creation of him and in His destiny for him. He saw how greatly man had fallen below the Divine intention. He was made for true sovereignty and sonship—sovereignty over circumstances and self, and sin. Man in fellowship with God was just a match for circumstances, but when out of fellowship man could not but succumb, and He felt in His own soul the tragedy of man's lost worth.

He saw men made to rise into the enrichments of sonship. They were built to fulfil their life in

fellowship with the Life Eternal, but they were missing greatness. He saw them as sheep scattering —harried by wolves, fleeced by circumstances, driven hither and thither like straws before the wind, without self-direction or sovereignty of soul—and it moved Him to a great compassion.

He let the doom of it all sound its echoes in His soul. He saw it all because He was conscious of the contrast, and "felt the torture of the difference."

Lost! Lost! rang out as He saw what men were doing with their lives. "Sons of loss," He called them. He would picture the contrast between the lighted home and the gathered company, and the one left out in the darkness to express the difference between finding and missing the realm of God. And over and over again, in figure after figure, He reflects the sensitiveness and anguish of His soul over these "Sons of loss." For Him it was always a tragedy when men fell short of spiritual affinity and inner unity. They were lost!

And if our experience was more "in character" with that of our Lord's we too would mediate something of the "torture of the difference" He felt.

1. *How shall the plea for discipleship be made?*

Making out the case for Christ means that we present Him as offering not only "a Way of escape" but a Way of life.

The theology of "escape" was in the old times presented as if it were the only point of departure for the Christian life and, as it has often been shown, Bunyan's pilgrim furnished the classical example.

This form of presentation brought the great issues of life and death urgently before the soul. The feeling of crisis was present and the gates of the new life were flung open as the Kingdom was taken by violence.

But our fathers (as Dr. Maltby has pointed out) were quite at a loss to help any one religiously unless they could first bring them to a deep sense of sin and misery—or at least to an acute sense of their danger.

The "Theology of Escape" not infrequently led to a sense of sin which, while reflecting the great reality that a life out of fellowship is a life that comes short of the Glory of God, tended to spread itself over the purely innocent things of life, as may be seen if Bunyan's experience in bell ringing is noted.

Now all touch with Christ's personality in seeking to "take His way" is quickening.

There is an approach to "The Life" by means of The Way. But to take the way we must "proceed." "He that followeth Me," said Jesus, "shall not walk in darkness but shall have the Light of Life." We come into His fellowship by taking His way as well as by receiving His forgiveness. But having entered into personal relationships the forgiveness aspect of His fellowship comes

into view and we take soundings in the deep notes that echo there.

In making out the case for Christ to-day we must recognize that any truly sincere and personal approach to Him finds acceptance. What makes the Christian starting-point is the giving of life in some distinct and sincere way, "a reference to Him." This intrigues one into His fellowship. As we make "reference" we come to the true "recognition" of Christ. The realization of Him follows as the spirit bears itself honouringly as in His sight. As the way of fellowship is sought and realized the need of forgiveness is felt and faced and the sense of the Lordship of Christ is transformed into a Saviour-Lordship. We do a despite to the spirit of Jesus if we deny the name of fellowship with Him to any who are seeking to take His outlook, to live in His way and to accept His values.

Bushnell tells how he began the Christian Life by taking Christ's way. He says: "My taking Christ's way might seem a conversion *for* the Gospel and not in it or by it." It was a "seeking first the Kingdom" and nothing less. It changed not only the outward life—for He gave up the law for the Gospel—but the very fibre and tissue of his being. It did not neutralize but heightened personality.

There followed in his lifetime a series of crises each bringing with it some new disclosure of truth. After his son's death,—of which he said: "He took my son and revealed His son in me,"—he said he

seemed to pass a boundary. He passed from partial seeings, glimpses and doubts, into the clearer knowledge of God and into His inspirations. The change was into a sense of the freeness of God and the ease of approach to Him.

No one can be more conscious than we are of the difficulty of holding together on the one hand the conviction that Evangelical experience never reaches its true fulfilment till it is a fellowship with Christ in His Cross which takes soundings in the ultimates of Judgment and Grace; and on the other the assurance that any real reference of the human soul to Christ in deep sincerity is a legitimate beginning of a fellowship which loyally followed out will lead to the deeper experience of the relationship of the Cross. To fail to hold both presents itself to us as disloyalty to Christ. Truth that in its verbal form strikes one as paradoxical is often resolved within the range of personal life. And this seems to us to be so in this case. The way to a real appreciation of the relationship seems to be along this line. Christ as a dynamic personal life is by His spirit not far from any one of us. We touch the vibrations of His life always in the depths of our souls.

That "Life" is always offering itself, insinuating itself into our souls, "inviting an invitation" so to speak. Sincerity and submission of the spirit to the higher calls of life gives us the warm sense of His nearness. When we make reference to Christ in the interest and action of life the new life begins in the measure in which we truly bow ourselves

before Him. If constant reference is made to Him the experience of Him deepens : " We are smitten " by His charms and our pace in following Him is accelerated. The life of fellowship deepens as we serve and bring ourselves freshly under His new demands.

Sooner or later the experience comes in which the deeper call of the Cross is heard, the fellowship life is toned to what is the truly " ultimate " and abides in the personality of Jesus as the Living and Dying Lord. The dynamic basis of personality helps not a little to get more clearly this truth, as also does the fact of the unity and wholeness of personal life, every part interacting with one another.

It depends upon the point of one's approach to the Kingdom, and upon the disposition of the soul, which aspect of the truth is glimpsed first—the Kingdom as a task, or as a gift, or as a hope. One may come to it on the side of the task, and go on to find its life a gift and its inspiration a hope. Or one may receive it as a gift and go on to find it a challenge, a task, and an inspiring hope.

To see the Kingdom of God indeed in all its aspects it must be seen as an experience of the heart, a process in history, and as a Divine consummation. Some see one aspect of it before the others. Some may reach the Cross by way of the Kingdom, and others may reach the Kingdom by way of the Cross.

In the unity of the personal dynamic life :

" Doing " may help us on towards " being."

" Giving " may help us on towards " receiving."

"Saving" may help us on towards "being saved."

For all true service of Jesus deepens in us the sense of the nearness of Him who was "among us as one that served," and it also deepens in us the sense of our need of Jesus in His saving office. Following Him faithfully in service leads to identification with Him in sacrificial love.

It is not as clearly realized as it should be amongst us that there is a qualitative difference between "the works of righteousness which we do ourselves" and the work we do from a sense of the challenge of Jesus. The one is sterile, the other seminal. The one has all the potencies of a new life in it, for it is in touch with a dynamic source of energy. The other is, being self-centred and self-dependent, an inert and inoperative thing.

"Doing things for Christ" has always a saving value, for it touches the principle of life in Christ Jesus. Also it throws the spirit back upon those resources, whereby alone, the life of service can be maintained.

Each approach is beset by its own peculiar perils and the soul in each is put upon its honour to "proceed." In respect of the graduated approach the danger is that we never "arrive." When the process continues long without crisis the spirit is liable, under the play of the world's influences, to give up any real and vital reference to Christ. The forms of religion are kept up for a time but no honouring relationship with Christ is maintained. Less and less does the spirit "face up" to the

challenge of Christ. More and more does the habit of rationalizing grow, and Church Membership may represent little more than good taste faintly tinctured with a pale religious cast.

A lady once asked Dr. Johnson where her son's education should begin. His bluff reply was: "Begin anywhere."

The graduated approach to fellowship with Christ must receive our hearty recognition. Many will come into the Kingdom of Christ that way whom we shall miss, if we in our Evangelism make the avenue to Christ a "one way road."

The Toc H movement, the Regnal League, and other kindred organizations are giving a decided witness to this truth, and no doubt along these lines much is being done to lead young people into a real fellowship with Christ as well as securing that through their service the complex of the world's indifference to Christ shall be broken up.

The crusade youth is most eager about is the fight for and the planning of the New World. If youth's sense of sin is weakened its social conscience is quickened as the conscience of the fathers never was. Our own "neglect" is marked in their "stress," and our own "stress" is registered in their "neglect"—a situation which inevitably follows from any failure to construe in "wholeness" the Gospel of Jesus. Youth feels intensely that Christ's way must be sought in moral and social problems. If they are not "enquirers" in the old sense of the word they are in the new.

And yet to maintain "tone" in the fellowship experience youth must proceed to the more and more intensive life in Christ. Crises arrive in the process of "taking Christ's way" which put the soul on its honour to go a step further. To "fall short" is our peril, "to shrink back" is our danger. We must arrive. We do not know the depth of Christ till we have experience with Him in His Cross.

The real test of the creative character of our faith lies here: whether we are prepared to go all the way. Whether indeed we become Christ's bond slaves or not.

One lovable young member of the Regnal League says: "I joined the outer circle and found the hands of thirty comrades extended to welcome me. When I entered the upper rooms for my initiation into the Inner Circle I found the hand of Christ stretched out to receive me. I took hold of it and I found a happiness I have never known before." He was one of the number to arrive. Many are called but few are "choice."

The call to pathways of Adventure is the challenge we are to sound out into the ears of Youth to-day. As the Rev. E. McLellan put it at the Bristol Conference: the call is to Find Him, to Find Yourself, to Find your Sphere. To win Youth we must not only preach the Romance of the Christian Life but exhibit it. The Romantic figure of Jesus—the Leader, the Pioneer, the Charming Personality—must not only be discoursed about but "presented" "in the life" and "in the character" of the Church's Fellowship.

As a friend of mine put it in the Group Fellowship recently: "Meanwhile, the older way does not seem to provide the 'tackling point' that is needed."

Dr. Grenfell of Labrador says: "The only thing Christ seemed to ask me was: 'Have you the courage to follow Me.' The older I grow the more I am convinced that my teachers were wrong to tell me 'I had nothing to do because it was all done.' I have got a clearer view of what God means for human life in schooners and fo'castles and in Labrador cottages than I have in any Cathedral or preaching place. What Christ seems to ask of me every time is not 'comprehension' but 'apprehension,' not 'belief' but 'courage.'"

This is in true line with the Saviour's words that "He that saveth his life shall lose it and whoso loseth his life shall find it," as it is also with the whole truth of Redemption, that God never says more than He does. He is what He proves Himself to be in action.

In the last analysis it seems as if the ground for the legitimacy of this approach lies in the very nature of God.

Some of us were favoured to hear a well-known writer and professor tell of the way in which he was led from one stage of Christian experience to another; from Christ as "the Way" to a knowledge of Christ as "the Life." He was brought up in the manse and imbibed Christian influences from earliest years. As he grew older he felt the call of Christ reaching him as "a call to a career, to an adventure."

In simple trust like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian Sea
The gracious calling of the Lord.

He heard and he answered. He started preaching and had good success. Many accepted Christ under his ministry. And then darkness and doubt set in. He felt utterly unfit for his work. He felt that if he did not receive help he must perish. He said he had felt like Simon Peter starting out on the water to go to Jesus. Jesus had said "Come" to his adventurous spirit. He started in the spirit of:

Just as I am, young, strong and free,
To be the best that I can be
For truth and righteousness and Thee,
Lord of my life, I come.

But as he essayed to go he found the conditions too boisterous for him. He felt no longer young, no longer strong, no longer free, and in utter helplessness, when about to sink, he had cried: "Lord, save me!" Now the language of his soul was more like:

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fighting and fears, within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come.

The point stressed by the speaker—and his words came very intimately home to our hearts—was that the first part of the experience was legitimately Christian. It was a real start. There was true-heartedness and loyalty in it and true submission, and Jesus as Lord was real. But, as

the experience of life deepened, there was the call to take the deeper way of fellowship in the Cross.

It is quite significant that Bunyan's Pilgrim is on the Highway some time before he reaches the Cross.

The point being that we must gladly recognize the earlier stages of discipleship as a real experience of fellowship with Christ. To require conviction of sin as the pre-requisite for fellowship and the forgiveness of sin as the initiating action of God in the soul is to create a narrowness where God has made the approach broad. There must be, it cannot be too often said, a real submission to Christ's Lordship and a true worship of Him. "No man knows Christ," says Denney, "till he worships Him." This, too, must be said: "No one can sincerely desire to bring in the Kingdom of God who is not prepared to give that Kingdom a welcome into his own heart."

We hold then that the evangelical experience is in the personal allegiance of the soul to Christ, in a life of fellowship with Him. It matters not where the relationship begins if a true fellowship is formed. Through acknowledgment of His Lordship we may go on to the experience of His Saviourhood, through the honouring of His values of life we may take the path that leads to a true vision of Him. The test is that He enthralls us. We cease to be the centre of our own world. We are "smitten."

In the interchanges of personal fellowship there is reception and action, action and reception, trust and obedience, obedience and trust. In some aspect

of the relationship we are more passive, we make a hearty consent to His grace, in others we are more active, and ask: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" There is alternation. Life is essentially periodic. The alternations are undertaken without any violations of true continuity. There is the stage of Adventure when life's flow is all outward and healthily so, as in adolescence. If introspection ensues, there is a morbid condition set up and artificiality develops. Our Lord calls to Youth as to Peter to come to Him on the crest of the wave of its high confidence. He does not refuse youth's adventuring faith and He makes Himself known. He comes "in another form" when this stage passes, but always from the first hour it is genuine Christian experience, even if not fully "toned."

Where then does the experience of conversion take place? It must first of all be remembered that "In mystery the soul abides." God's comings to the soul are like the way of the eagle, difficult to trace. They belong to the inscrutable things "past finding out." "Conversion," as Dr. Maltby puts it, "is more than mere acquiescence in a religious environment." It really takes place "when the selfish principle is transcended and when the higher order of life comes to us in Christ." When we respond to the life that moves out to us in the grace of Christ and receive His life within our own. We would not time it, so to speak, when the river runs out towards the sea, but when the tide flows back to meet the river, deepening

its channels, pushing back its banks, giving a new "tang" to its waters.

### 2. *The Winning of Youth to Christ.*

The winning of Youth for Christ must of course base itself on the great principles which underlie all educational work. There may be perhaps some value in stating them:

1. As life is a developing organism, passing from stage to stage in its unfolding powers, we must keep step with each stage of advancing life, not running before nor lagging behind.

2. We must act upon the child's nature, not by rigid prescription but by suggestion, taking care not to overlay the child's growing mind. Far more depends upon what we "start" than upon what we "state." Much more rests on what we "lead out" than upon what we "laid in."

3. Then action is the great educational factor in youth. We learn by what we do. No impression is deep unless it leads to expression. Each of these great principles has its own suggestions to offer for the winning of youth.

Actually the child is born again more than once in the process of its development. And at each stage the person of Jesus must be presented in its own distinctive way. Each instinct has its own appointed time of expression, and our wisdom must always be shown by a careful observance of the child's nature.

"Our work among the young," says Prof.

McKenzie, "will be more effective when we see that we are not to seek to save so much as to make the children 'safe.'"

Children are extraordinarily susceptible to suggestion; unconsciously they play up to the expectations we have of them. Atmosphere is almost everything.

As Frœbel said: "They are always busy making the outer inner." There is nothing wrong about "suggestion." "It is the mother's method with her child, hence her love; it is the author's method, hence his style; it is the politician's method, hence his oratory; it is the salesman's method, hence his persuasion and tact."

There must always be room left for youth to complete the full circle of the truth uttered to it. They feel a real horror of older people closing over them; they cannot bear our too great closeness; we must give them room for expression. Some violin players at the conclusion of a pianissimo passage will continue to use the bow as if playing, but are careful to lift it above the strings. The listeners thus, in imagination, complete in softened echo the sound they hear die away. So we must leave the mind of the child large room for the play of its imaginative faculty.

Biography is full of instances in which record is made of the helpful or injurious influences of suggestion made upon the minds of the subjects of the records. Lord Ribblesdale tells how: "As in Bethlehem the edict went forth that all the world should be taxed, so with a number of my

passive companions was I detailed for confirmation. I was not consulted, my tutor explained without conviction; affirmed without faith, he warned without alarm, he repudiated without distaste," and the further story tells of the evil influence of it all.

Canon Raven, telling the story of his adolescence, says that religion was presented to him as an adjunct of morality, and exclaims: "If only Jesus had been presented to me as Cæsar was."

Most of what is to be done in the early days must be done through atmosphere. The child's nature, like a sponge, absorbs all that is about it. The sense of the beauty of Jesus and His charm can best be conveyed to the little child's mind by the fair characters of mothers and teachers.

At almost all the periods of early youth action as well as atmosphere is the great educational factor.

Children always want to do something, and very largely their soul life will be built up by providing them with opportunities for hearty self expression. Mr. C. E. Montague, in *Rough Justice,* tells of a boy of ten, who went to Church for the first time since his christening. His heart opened to every new emotion as the story was told of Jesus suffering dreadful pain because something was not done He wanted them to do. The boy said to his nurse: "Why are they singing another hymn instead of rushing out to do something?" The nurse when anxiously questioned said: "We must not take things too much to heart. People will think us odd if we do."

Very frequently we as Christian people act the part of the nurse and hold up the rising emotions of a child's nature when intent on creative action.

Perhaps I may be allowed to indicate through another story the great importance of this principle that the demand of a child's nature is for active expression.

In one of her books Dr. Maria Montessori tells the story of one of the observations which led her to the discovery of her special method of teaching. A small child was playing on the gravel path in the Boboli Gardens while its nurse sat close by on a seat. The child was endeavouring to fill a little bucket with stones, but just as the bucket was almost full it toppled over. Undismayed the child started again, and once more the bucket fell over. Yet a third time the attempt was made but only with the same result. The kind nurse, watching these fruitless endeavours, got up herself, filled the bucket with stones, and gave it to the child. Whereupon there was a passionate outburst of crying. The child did not want a full bucket of stones. He wanted to fill the bucket with stones himself.

We are quite a long way yet from fully realising the vital importance of this factor in the development of the child. Who of us has not been startled by noticing the new interest taken in Young People's meetings when we have relinquished our own control of the reins and passed them into the hands of the little ones. "Exercise thyself unto Godliness," seems to represent the Golden Rule for

educational work amongst children. It is ours mainly to see that the exercises are regularly done. In all our contact with the children we must mediate Jesus to them surrounding them with the influences of His life of charm, remembering that "He that receiveth a little child in My name receiveth Me."

A boy or girl's decision may seem a very short step, but it is the first and it is often the first step that counts.

My own method throughout my ministry has been to treat with great seriousness the written decisions of little children for Christ, and in later years it has been my joy to remind the children of their earlier action.

We must get habit on our side. Without its help Christian education would be well-nigh impossible. In doing things we form our character; a task helps us to find ourselves.

We are to be sympathetic students of the unfolding life, ever seeking to learn from the child in order to teach him.

I would like to include here a letter Baron von Hügel wrote to a little girl friend of his. He says: "In the Scottish rivers the salmon will leap and leap, and only after much leaping will they succeed in jumping up into the higher reaches. Jump, child, jump. I'll jump with you. We shall both manage it." Nothing could be better as an example of the kind of way in which children should be led to decision for Christ.

In Adolescence the adventurous is always the attractive, and what has already been said about

the appeal to take Christ's way is entirely in fitness here.

> At the parting of the ways,
> At the crisis of my days,
> Thou art calling, calling, calling,
> And my heart its Lord obeys.

Life, as it has been said, is essentially periodic, and at this stage Romance is dominant. It is a time of vivid freshness.

This is of all times "the season of the soul." These seasons come and they "come to pass." They come and we may improve them; they come and we may miss them; and "a blighted spring means a barren year."

The Sacrament is the ideal ordinance at which an adolescent can vow his allegiance to Christ. I think we have yet to learn how valuable an evangelizing agency the Sacrament may be in these days when reticence has been carried to an extreme in the matter of the public profession of Christ. Of course preparation classes are needed for the careful instruction of young people in the meaning of discipleship and the significance of the Lord's Table.

The Boy Scouts organizations and Girl Guide Movements, if wisely officered, may become an invaluable means for securing the allegiance of young people to Christ and their committal of themselves in public confession at the Sacramental Table.

## CHAPTER X.

### Some Concluding Reflections.

IN the consideration of our theme we have seen how the present situation is one of menace from without and exhaustion from within. The threatening wave seems too likely to overwhelm us if the Church's life continues at "the ebb." The need we all feel is for a new creative tidal force to come to us from the side of God. Historically that creative power has come to the race, through the dynamic action of God in the Person of His Son, in Christ's Living and Dying and Rising Power. What happened, as we see it, was this. Sin always destroys fellowship. It introduces a false centre into human lives and history. It alienates, separates between us and the Lord our God. And that situation followed out has only one end. The Life of God is His children's breath and they pine away except as they make it the oxygen of their souls.

But a movement took place from the only side from which it could effectively take place. A new world was brought in to redress the balance of the old. New creative powers "came by Jesus Christ,"

and the fullest and richest conception of what He came to do is expressed in the word "Identification." He "stood in" with the race in its desperate need and "put new life into us" by the sacrifice of Himself, taking away sin, "the deathly thing."

The "Identification" which is the seminal principle of the Cross involves such a kind of mediation that it is always marked by suffering and sacrificing love.

Now what was historically mediated to the race was inwardly mediated to the heart of man by the Spirit. The life of God becomes available to us through the Spirit. The Spirit's action however, as was God's action in Christ, is utterly personal. There are no short cuts to the goal. The principle of identification in all its rich values must be honoured in Christian lives and for that purpose mediation through personality is the only finally effective method.

The Life of God in all its costly way of sacrifice and service must be followed in our relationships one with another. In taking that way we pay a price, but in the adventurous sacrifice we touch new springs of diviner joy, "the joy of the Lord."

These exhilarations which lead us to sacrifice—and yet to scorn the name of sacrifice—are never ours when we are living merely prudential lives.

By making fresh contacts with the Life of God in both its "poles," we are called too "to make fresh reconciling" contacts with the world of men in self-identifying love. The life we live is so determined by its interactions that when we fail

on one side we are bound to fail on the other. There is a true priority in this interacting life. The relationship with God is primal. To bring it in at the end of our social-relationship life is to do it dishonour and "to get things in reverse," suffering as a consequence from the paralysing sense of exhaustion and defeat. That is not however to say that the social order of our service is not to be in our vision but it must be in the passion of a great evangelizing life that we are to enter upon that relationship if we are to "keep up our courage." Youth is called to the adventurous task of "reconciling all things to Christ," and the more seriously it takes its task the more surely will it need to throw itself back upon the creative life of God. Indeed the true starting point is to commence with "the given" and not "the self-grown." Youth in its adventurous service will become by the service of the Kingdom the nucleus for the rehabilitation of the Church.

In the challenge to Youth no good will ever come of "reducing the terms" or "dropping the price" of allegiance. But any starting point is legitimate if it is sincere and Christ is in our vision, for He can be trusted to lead on the spirit of man by process and crisis, as well as by crisis and process as His purpose requires.

The Call and Challenge of the Evangelist must, as ever, be a call (1) to view the charms of Christ till He cast His spell. (2) To let "all go" into the venture of following Him, relying on His resources to see us through.

The methods of adventuring service in an identifying passion are as manifold as the activities of personal life. But there is great need amid the confusion of the times to come to a Gospel which is recognizably the same. We often hear evangels which cancel each other out. What is the seminal thing? At what point can we present a united front before the world and counter the menace which threatens us—restoring the while the Church's ebbing vitality? Let me conclude this study by expressing the truth in the words of Dr. Maltby, whose service to our times in showing the unutterable significance of Christ is so great and gracious. (I quote somewhat freely and fragmentarily.)

"At a certain depth we are all one. An undergraduate does not differ from a ploughman, an old man from a younger one. Our business is to announce to men that God has dealt with the human situation in a great and decisive way. He has established a new relationship with men in Jesus Christ, His Son, and in it, "offers Himself to us." This truth has floated out of men's minds. . . . It is for everybody. If you deny it to one you deny it to all. Unless you can say it is for everybody you hold the truth precariously. If it is only for people of a particular variety, psychology will take the second step for you and "spirit" it away.

"God comes out of the inaccessible and presents Himself in a way intelligible to man, in such a way that man may know that he knows God in truth in Christ. I heard a man preach recently who gave me the impression of possessing a hesitating,

divided, reluctant mind. He was like a Conservative Lord Mayor proposing the health of Ramsay Macdonald and trying to forget he was a Conservative and remember that he was Lord Mayor."

When we are preaching Christ the sense must be mediated—" He is here offering Himself." The fifty years of itinerating ministry of John Wesley is not explained by relationship to, say, the doctrine of substitution, though that may have been the particular mould the truth he preached may have taken; it was the spirit of the man ever crying: " Look at God taking 'away our sins.' Open your eyes and wonder! And He is here present within His salvation, offering it to you to-day."

Out of that experience of the reception of the offer of forgiveness and fellowship there issued a willingness to serve and a willingness to sacrifice—without calling it sacrifice—which transformed the whole outlook of the life of this land.

If there had been only one Christian in the wide world who had " accepted that offer " he would have gone on—that is certain—to declare the news to all whom he could reach.

# APPENDIX

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## Open-air Evangelism.

It may be useful to some who would like to prepare themselves, privately or in Group Fellowship, for Open-air Evangelism, if a series of script notes were given which we issued in connexion with a Spiritual Advance Campaign in Manchester.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR OPEN-AIR WORK.

(1) Choose a place where people normally gather if at all possible, securing beforehand the permission of the Police Superintendent.

(2) Let the company gather in support, stand in close formation within arm's reach of the speaker and right in front of him. Outsiders gather much more quickly *behind* others than in front of them.

(3) See that the support given to the speaker is one of sympathetic and eager interest. The speaker's difficult task is made much lighter by the individual attention of his group, whilst outsiders are more readily attracted if they see that others are evidently intent on what is being advanced.

(4) Singing need not be the first exercise unless the company is a good one; then it may safely be attempted. Often it is advisable to save the singing till later, when some well-known hymn may be sung with greater effect.

(5) Often the best method would be for the group to bow for a moment in silence, then for the leader to express himself in the way of a few pleasantries to those directly before him, his object being to gain the attention of those at a distance by means of the company who stand near.

(6) The start is always the difficulty, and one must often be content to make the first five minutes the opportunity for getting on easy relationships with those who are inclined to stand at a distance.

(7) After the leader has paved the way, one specially asked to introduce the topic should be in readiness to take his turn. Others should listen keenly to prepare to take up the line of the first speaker's argument.

(8) What is needed most greatly to-day is, not disjointed exhortation, but a clearly reasoned and sympathetically stated presentation of the case for Christ.

(9) The addresses should be provocative in the best sense, and the proof that the right atmosphere has been created is that kindly interchange between speaker and audience breaks out spontaneously. The great value of this interchange is that the speaker gets the needed insight into the point of view of the outside man.

## SUGGESTED TOPICS.

### 1. Clearing the Ground.

An attempt to remove the misunderstanding which causes men to hold off from Christ.

(*a*) Men must ever "play in the rough" where Christianity is concerned so long as they approach it from without. It is essentially an experience and a life. We get on to the "fair way" as we take hold of it from the inside.

(*b*) So much depends on "taking hold of the right end" in religion. So many want to take the second lesson first. They view Christianity as a burdensome scheme of duties instead of

a promise of life. They think primarily of its restraints and negations, instead of its glorious urge and its positives. They attempt to discover it in a dogma, at the end of a string of words. They would find it more truly if they commenced with their heart-strings—at the sense of their need or some pulse of their hope.

(1) *They wrongly identify Christianity with its Institutions, its documents and creeds.* These are the symbols, extensions, and necessary expressions of our faith but they but imperfectly reflect and represent its life.

(2) *They wrongly associate Christianity with a dwarfed and repressed life.* They have associated religion with particular and partitioned-off duties. They do not recognize its relevance to all life. They think too that it concerns " the life that is to come " more than the life that now is.

(3) *They harbour prejudices which are deadly.* Whilst Christianity recognizes temperamental differences in men, and allows their free expression in differing forms of worship, it makes worship essential to all well-being. Without worship " the splendour of God " drops out of life. We may choose our forms of food and light but we cannot choose whether we will eat or see. And Christ represents Himself as Life and Light and Bread.

Application.—Begin with Christianity by commencing with Christ. Begin with what is personal not with what is propositional. Begin with what is vital not with what is merely verbal. Begin not with institutional religion but with individual. Every man's script of life is an unconscious prophecy of Christ and a cry for His fellowship.

### 2. Can Human Nature be Changed ?

(*a*) It is deliberately proposed by some that (1) As men have blood in their veins and not water they must go the pace, that they are helpless before the appeal of their appetites ; (2) also that they are victims of economic necessity and powerless under the pressure of circumstances.

(*b*) Whilst it is admitted that we must "Accept the Universe" and "Accept ourselves" seeing that there is a constitution of things, and seeing "that it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves," yet we must make acceptance of them not as our fate but as our test. We are not to take life lying down. We must "fight or rot." We cannot choose our starting point but we can determine our trend. Our temperament has unchanging elements but we can be preserved from its tyranny. Hard circumstances need not maim us; we can extract from them what will qualify us for nobler service.

(*c*) Everything turns on (1) The interpretation we put on life. (2) The ideals we choose to live by. (3) The share we claim or fail to claim in the life of God in Christ.

(*d*) (1) *Men who claim that human nature cannot be changed put a low and mean interpretation on human nature.* The nature of a thing is not discovered in its origin but in its outcome. A lily is not adequately defined as a crinkled bulb but it is a thing of light and beauty. Man has a "high calling" to sonship and freedom in Christ Jesus. We become what we are taken for and what we "take ourselves for." There is a danger of forgetting who we are.

(2) *Men who claim that human nature cannot be changed forget that man is a creature who can choose the ideals which mould him.* Man has a selective power. He can choose the colour of life. He can determine where he lives in the region of his desire. "Such is life," says the cynic, and he reacts upon it scurvily. "Such is life," says Christ, and He reacts upon it gloriously. We are not appendages of the wheel of things, we have our hand on the helm. The same set of conditions which embitters one man ennobles another. The seer determines the scene, the outlook, and the prospect.

(3) *Men who claim human nature cannot be changed treat it as if it were a self-contained, detached, and finished thing, whereas the truth about it is that it has its first context, its rights and its resources in the life of God.* Man, as such, has a share in the life of God. When that share is claimed human nature becomes a transformed thing. The question we have proposed is not one for speculation but for test: Prove it.

### 3. Is there any Alternative to Christ?

A consideration of the Dilemma into which rejection of Christ lands us.

(*a*) *Many are leaving Christ,* we are told. Some because they have made an economic their gospel. Some because they think Christianity "cuts no ice," or because Christ's way of life is "impossibly high." Men clamour for something more substantial, something less mystical. To them Christ's proposal of inward renewal seems wide of the mark.

(*b*) *Our answer is:* Men write down their true value when they reckon on satisfying their infinite nature with anything less than "words of eternal life." What is most obvious in man's need is not necessarily his most essential need. Experts often seem to run away from their problems in order to solve them. A nerve specialist will go right back to his patient's childhood for his cue. A construction expert may find the cause of the cracks on the second floor in undermined foundations. No one knows human life as Christ knows it. We do not solve our problems by tearing up His rendering of them. Men may burn His prescription, they have still their plague left.

(1) *We must have some interpretation of life*—Christ's or another's. If we disown Him we must seek another to take His place. If not Jesus, who? Men light-heartedly and off-handedly turn away from Christ only to find themselves at the beginning of their perplexities and not at the end of them. We are so made that we must come to some conclusion as to what life means. Every time we act we proceed upon some assumption of the meaning of the whole. Neither time nor labour have their meaning in themselves. There are alternatives to Christ's view of life, but they are not acceptable. They depress vitality, they reduce life's worth, they make us shudder. They leave us a prey to life's worst fears and ills.

(2) *We must have some adequate inspiration to live life*—to be half-inspired is an infliction. Buoyancy passes, disappointment comes, and a man needs some vital urge to enable him to keep going. "Even the youths faint." Moral effort flags

in the most promising. Who but Christ can always hold a man up to his best?

(3) *We must come to some integration or harmonization of life.* Animals begin with a harmonized nature. Man must win his harmony. His bundle of instincts must be unified and sublimated. How? Only by the One in whom all things hold together. It is Christ or chaos.

Christ offers to man: (1) A true reading of life. (2) An adequate reinforcement of life. (3) A harmonious readjustment of life.

### 4. What Has Christianity Done?

*Is it played out?*

(*a*) We cannot make too great claims for our faith, even as we cannot make too lowly claims for our loyalty to it.

(1) *We can claim it as the spring and fountain of what is best in our British life.* With all his faults a Britisher's word is his bond. It is the distinction of Christianity that it creates a finer sensitiveness of conscience. The deepest difference between the peoples of the earth to-day is not that of climate or colour, but of loyalty or disloyalty to Christ. He is the touchstone of judgment. They range themselves on the right or left of Him.

(2) *We can claim that Christianity has sanctified and safeguarded our freedom.* He who taught us the Golden Rule has shown us that freedom is a thing to be bestowed as well as claimed. It is not liberty to do as we like but liberty to do as we ought.

(3) *We can claim that Christianity has given us democracy, its roots and ideals.* Christ reared the standard of human rights by making every human being the expression of the Father's thought and the object of the Father's care. Every one counts for one with Him. The world into which Christ came had no word for personality as we know it now. Human nature had a meaner interpretation, e.g., the ancient who boasted: "I am a human and nothing human is alien to me," left instructions

as he went on a journey that if his expected child proved to be a girl it should be destroyed. Democracy even now must wither if it is not rooted in spiritual ideals.

(4) *Christ has given to Childhood its Charter,* to the slave his freedom, to many of the wronged their rights, and its work will not be complete till all that offends the law of kindness is cast out of human society.

(5) *We claim that the great remedial ministries in the world to-day spring from the Spirit of Christ.* He has brought a new climate in which gracious ministries flourish. Men are more sensitive to the sufferings of others than ever before because of Him.

(6) *Christianity is not played out.* It has been found difficult and not tried. We have not had nineteen centuries of Christianity, we have not had one. Christianity asks for fair play. It seeks a fair trial. It asks to be voluntarily accepted, followed, and rigorously applied.

> There is no expeditious road
> To pack and label men for God,
> And save them by the barrel load.

### 5. What Does Christ Stand for?

An interpretation of what Christ means for personal and communal life.

(*a*) Whatever differences represent themselves in the Churches of Christendom, there is no real difference of view as to what Christ stands for.

(1) *He stands for the Friendliness of the Universe and for the Fatherhood of God.* Haeckel confesses that if he were permitted to ask the higher powers a question and could get an answer, his question would be: "Is the Universe friendly?" Are we the sport of the gods and the victims of their spite, or can we stand strongly and confidently on the utter and unchanging love of One whose name is Father? Christ took his stand there and staked His life on it and God vindicated Him.

(2) *He stands for the initiative of God in Man's salvation and the significance of human history.* Christ showed that God had involved Himself in our mortal sorrows and struggles, and by integrating Himself in Christ in history had given to the story of man upon the earth a new splendour. Life is worth while.

(3) *He stands for the consequence of human personality.* He took our nature, shared our lot, interpreted at its highest our worth.

(4) *It therefore follows,* and Christ made it unmistakably clear, that in communal life, as the universe is friendly, our business is to *cultivate fellowship and goodwill* in the varied relationships of life. God wills our fellowship and He is the soul of fellowship itself.

(5) He calls us to give our strength to the renderings of service and not to the mere acquisition of property or the making of money.

(6) He challenges us to set human personality where He sets it, as high above the value of things, and to see the wealth which is life.

*That is where Christ stands: where do we stand?* It is not always where His church has stood, but it is where He is calling it to stand now. In so far as we have failed to stand with Him that is our shame. There can be no personal harmony nor social stabilization save as we stand with Him, stand by His strength and for His values.

### 6. Why Drag in Religion?

Our problems are perplexing enough without it. Our answer is that we cannot go any length towards the solution of our industrial and social problems without it.

(1) *Because Religion gives the cue as to why we are here at all,* as to what the whole thing means, and as to how the whole thing ends. It provides the touchstone and test of what is going to be finally satisfying in social and personal life.

*This is not any kind of world.* It has a mind of its own and nothing can ever be permanent in life which does not accord with that mind. The cue religion gives is that right back of everything and in and through everything is a purpose of good which can never be finally thwarted. And just as a man must integrate the wall he builds into the laws of the universe—gravitation—in order to secure its permanence, so must we in industrial and social life if there is to be any lasting peace.

*Without the Cue* which religion gives we mistake the frame for the picture, we confuse the furnishings of life with life itself.

*Without this Cue* the Universe will ever seem a ghastly muddle.

*Science does not give us the necessary Cue.* It only describes processes, it does not preach ends. It gives "how," it does not tell "why."

*If we are in a fog* about the nature of things and the purpose of things we cannot be clear about the true relationships of life or industry. The string holds the beads together, if it slips, all relationship or order is lost; so if the thread of God's purpose is lost all things drop to pieces.

(2) *Because Religion gives the Cure for all disordered relationships. It makes us sure of our centre.* And as the staves of a wheel draw nearer to each other as they centre themselves in the hub, so human relationships find their centre in Christ.

It is a police regulation that in all places of public concourse "*The exit must be plainly advertised.*" Christ is the way out. Christ has been placarded before you. He is the way out of the complex. Christ shows us that God's part is the hardest part and He is the greatest worker. He calls us to be of the same mind with Him and to fling our energy where He flings His. We are challenged to bet our heart-strings on the reality which He is.

*Whether we know or not* we all act upon one of three assumptions and react according as we believe the Universe to be (1) Friendly, (2) Unfriendly, (3) Indifferent.

7. ARE WE ONLY ROMANCING WHEN WE CALL THE GOSPEL GOOD NEWS?

(*a*) *No, it's the sober truth.* When Tennyson visited Mablethorpe in Lincolnshire and asked an old friend of his, "What's the news?" she answered: "Christ came into the world to save sinners." To which the poet replied: "Well, that's old news, and it's true news, and it's good news." And when we "reel it off," or speak of it off-handedly or as a matter of course, we do dishonour to the greatest thing in the world. Part of the facility with which the Gospel is to find its way to its hearers is through the wonder it creates in the mind of the speaker of it. The Gospel needs to be represented in (1) the wonder of our imagination, (2) the wealth of our thinking, (3) the worth of our character.

(1) *It is good news because it makes us songful about God.* God is too often a "desert"; or He is distant and stands clear. Apart from the coming of Jesus He is an abstract noun, or He is a magnified conscience, and the shadow within us is projected and rests on the face of God and we feel our best hope is to get safely away from Him. The truth however is that in Christ we are not taken out of God's way but taken to His heart.

(2) *It makes us hopeful about history.* If God is in the struggle and involved in its history then history is all right. It is no second-rate affair and will not end in a fiasco. "History becomes the procession of the coronation of Christ."

(3) *It makes us radiant about life.* The day star arises in our hearts. We come to a victorious sense of life. We read our life, not in the light of its seamy process, but in the light of its great end. Christ enables us to live in defiance of things.

(4) *The Gospel gives a man a second chance,* because it shows God breaking the vicious circle in which one sin involves another. He breaks the lure of sin by countering it with the awe of His love. He gives, not good advice, but renewed desires. He gives us a fresh start.

(5) *It casts fire into man's heart*, sets it free under the inspiration of a great forgiveness. God deals with us not on the level of our deserts, but on the level of His own love: "Bring forth the best robe." Just as a full tide lifts everything up to its own level so God lifts man through His forgiveness into His friendship.

(6) *It begins with us where we are.* It is not impossibly high, it is immediately near. It is not a picture out of reach but a personal and present experience.

8. What has Christianity to say about the Last Things?

(*a*) *Man is so made that he must think about the future.* To try to make short shrift of this instinct of Man, and say: "This talk of the last things gets on my nerves. Let's get to business," prompts the question: "Yes, but what is the business?" We must ask: "What does the whole thing mean?" "The last act crowns the play." Besides great characters can only sustain themselves on a great sense of life. We must ask: "But what good comes of it at last?" The complete sentence tells the truth, not the half. It is not enough to say, as the man falling from the fourth story is said to have exclaimed as he passed the second story window: "All right so far."

(1) *We claim the reasonableness of the doctrine of immortality.* (*a*) *It may be said that appearances are against it.* But we have often to correct the report of our senses by the exercise of our reflection. A straight stick put into a calm pool *seems* to be crooked.

(*b*) *The lowly origin of man's belief in survival* may be said to be against it. But all things have a lowly origin and we know the nature of a thing only by seeing what it becomes.

(*c*) *Consider how persistent this sense has been in man.* When a sense loses its stimulus it finally becomes extinct, but this sense has thrived with the growth of the spirit of man.

(2) *But the assurance of immortality can never be ours at the end of a chain of reasoning.* Fellowship with God Himself alone

gives that. Life eternal is an experience of God in Christ. Eternal life is not at the end of the days but at the heart of the days. It is not something which awaits us but something now in possession—a Christ-quality of life, which is death-defying: "Because He lives we shall live also."

(3) *What it may be asked is the Christian doctrine about Hell?* Our fathers interpreted Hell in too materialistic ways, but their attempts and the attempts of the New Testament writers, were suggestions of realities which can never be put into words." We have done with ideas associated with physical torture, and with ideas which rest for support on the vindictiveness of God. God reacts upon sin by taking it upon Himself. He shares the shame and the consequences of sin with us. The doctrine of Hell suggests that there is a real ultimacy about personality and will which even God cannot evade without our sanction, and Christ's own solemn words: "I would, but ye would not," hint at it.

(1) *There is a necessity for segregation here*—the sane from the insane, the healthy from the unsound in health.

(2) *There must be some reflection of fundamental moral distinctions* there as here. At the Cross those distinctions are seen to be absolute and they must be honoured in the beyond.

(3) *Some suffering must persist if there is to be continuity* between that world and this, for the best men often feel unable to forgive themselves.

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